

**Well Workplace Award
Executive Summary**

**West Virginia
Medical Institute
Silver Award**

Information in this publication is carefully reviewed for accuracy. Questions, comments, or ideas are welcome. Please direct to Dr. David Hunnicutt, Executive Editor, at the address below.

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**WELLNESS COUNCILS
OF AMERICA**

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General Information

WELL WORKPLACE

Silver Application

Basic Information

Name of Organization:	West Virginia Medical Institute
Address of Organization	
Council Affiliation	Wellness Council of West Virginia
Contact Person	Julie Lejeune
Title	Health Educator
Work Telephone	
Fax Number	
E-Mail Address	
Alternate Contact	Mary Sansom
Parent Organization	West Virginia Medical Institute
Number of Sites Covered:	One
Number of Employees Covered by this application	113
Nature of Business or Industry	Health care quality improvement organization
Name of CEO	John W. Wiesendanger
Date of Application	May 28, 2004

Organizational and Program Background

Overview of Organization:

WVMI is a not-for-profit quality improvement organization (QIO) dedicated to improving the health of the people we serve.

WVMI was founded in 1973 as an educational arm of the West Virginia State Medical Association. Since then, we've evolved into an independent, multi-faceted national resource for quality improvement. Our CEO and our multi-disciplinary staff of 113 provides health information management services to multiple clients, including the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense and state Medicaid programs.

WVMI renewed the Well Workplace Bronze Application in 2003. This is the Well Workplace Silver Application.

Background of Wellness Initiative:

WVMI's wellness program began in 1999 when WVMI's new CEO, John Wiesendanger, expressed an interest in developing a program. While WVMI had sponsored many wellness activities in previous years, establishment of a formal program allowed the organization to integrate wellness into its workplace. Offering opportunities for employees to improve their health supports both productivity and cost containment strategies within the organization.

One of the first steps in launching the wellness program was the creation of a wellness committee representing every department in the organization. The committee designed a

wellness assessment, reviewed the results and implemented programs in areas of emphasis pinpointed in the assessment.

Vision and Mission Statements:

WVMI's mission is to improve the health of the people we serve. WVMI's vision is to be the pre-eminent health quality improvement organization in the United States.

The wellness committee supports the corporate mission by improving the health status of the workforce. The wellness mission is to improve the health and productivity of our employees by educating and motivating them to make healthy lifestyle choices. The wellness vision is to promote healthy aging for all employees.

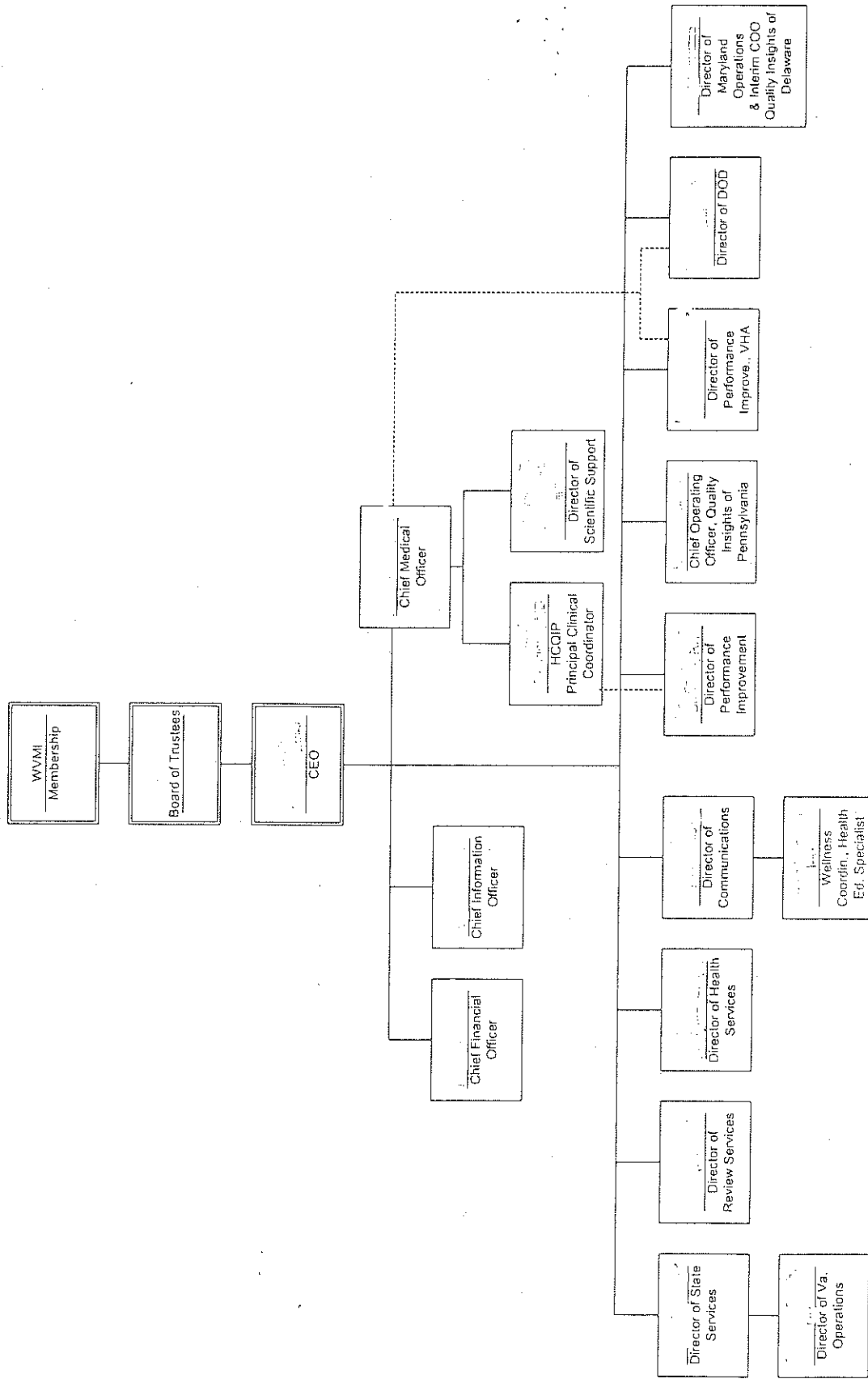
Organizational Chart: Attachment 1

Overview of the Look and Feel of the Wellness Program (7 C's)

Senior Level Support

As a quality improvement organization, WVMI recognizes that successful programs need a champion. John Wiesendanger, WVMI's CEO, is that champion. He literally walks the walk and talks the talk of wellness. He was the first person to sign up for the 'post holiday' worksite step counting program that encouraged employees to increase their steps by using the stairs rather than the elevator and by searching for opportunities to add steps during the work day. At the end of the month long program, he was the first place finisher at the Chesterfield work site. In a feature article in the employee newsletter, WVMInsights, he states "Doing the right thing when it comes to health is for everybody's benefit. And it's money well spent, and a good investment, even if people just feel a little better."

WVMI Corporate Organizational Structure



Cohesive Wellness Committee

WVMI has a diverse wellness committee representing every department in the organization. Committee members are passionate about keeping themselves healthy and improving the health status of fellow employees. The committee really functions like a team, with members volunteering their special skills and talents to make wellness programs effective and fun. For example, the Information Technology representative designed an interactive web site, www.wvmi.org/steps that allows employees to easily record steps or miles for behavior change programs. The health systems analyst took employees participating in the “Where in the World” walk program on an entertaining European tour by plotting miles from a starting destination of Buckingham Palace and ending in Spain. The communications representative regularly covers wellness activities in the organization wide employee newsletter, WVMInsights. All wellness team members take turns preparing Monday morning wellness e-mails that address health needs and interests identified in the wellness operating plan.

Collecting Data

WVMI’s wellness committee is particularly focused on offering programs based on the health needs and interests of employees and in providing feedback to keep employees informed of successes and challenges. In November, 2003, the wellness committee launched its “Step Up to Silver” campaign to move WVMI’s wellness program to the Silver Well Workplace status. The campaign began with wellness planning sessions designed to involve all employees. Four “working lunch” sessions were held at WVMI’s Chesterfield and Northgate locations. The wellness coordinator and team members led

the strategy sessions that included a brief history of the wellness program and an introduction to the Well Workplace process to reach new employees who were not familiar with previous efforts. An employee needs and interest survey was distributed at the planning sessions and wellness team members distributed copies to their department employees who were unable to attend. The committee also announced that the first organization wide health screenings would be held in the spring of 2004. Throughout the year, lunch and learn programs cover topics like healthy eating, fighting fatigue and financial wellness. A program evaluation captures employee response to these programs and asks for suggestions for future programs.

Crafting an Operating Plan

WVMI's operating plan is a working document that is based on data collection, employee feedback and wellness committee input. The primary focus of the operating plan is to improve health indicators which have consistently addressed healthy eating and physical activity. Improved nutrition and activity levels were also recommended in the summary report from WVMI's first organization wide health screening in March, 2004.

Choosing Appropriate Interventions

Employee surveys have shown that walking is the most popular activity among WVMI's employees and participation data has shown that programs offering friendly competition draw the largest interest. These two elements are included in WVMI's behavior change programs. Employee surveys and the fall 2003 wellness planning session helped identify other health interests and needs that can often be addressed in monthly lunch and learn sessions.

Supportive Environment

WVMI offers a supportive wellness environment for employees. Tobacco restrictions, emergency procedures, and drug free workplace policies are included in the policy and procedures manual provided to every new employee. These policies are also reviewed and discussed at formal new employee orientation sessions. WVMI offers all employees the opportunity to participate in health insurance, life insurance, disability and flexible benefit plan programs. Benefit plans are reviewed annually and employees are advised of changes and updates via e-mail and written communications.

Consistently Evaluating Outcomes

WVMI tracks participation numbers and satisfaction rates, reviews program completion rates, distributes program evaluations at monthly lunch and learns, and conducts an annual needs and interest assessment. Data is analyzed and summaries are shared at monthly wellness committee meetings and with senior management.

Individuals making program what it is today:

WVMI is an organization that exists to improve the health of the people we serve, and that includes our employees. The wellness program would not be possible without the support of our CEO and the commitment of an active and involved wellness committee.

“In our strategic plan, we’ve identified employees as our most valuable asset. In order to continue improving the health of West Virginia communities, we must enable our employees to remain healthy. WVMI’s Wellness Program offers a variety of programs and resources to ensure our staff’s health and well-being.” *John Wiesendanger, CEO*

Highlight Three Unique Strengths:

WVMI's wellness committee relies on employee feedback to structure programs that promote healthy behaviors and are popular with employees. Three strengths built into wellness programs are flexibility, community service, and tracking.

Flexible programs. Many WVMI employees travel or are committed to deadline projects on a regular basis. To encourage these employees to become involved in wellness challenges, the wellness team developed flexible programs that give participants options that fit into their schedules. For example, the holiday season "T-WELL-ve Days of Christmas" healthy eating and activity program allowed participants to select any twelve days following Thanksgiving and before Christmas to track healthy behaviors. These programs have higher participation and completion rates and are rated favorably by participants.

Community service. WVMI's wellness committee knows that wellness supports the whole person and programs should help employees not only feel good, but also "feel good about themselves". WVMI gives employees the opportunity to earn wellness points through community service projects like collecting food for food pantries or toiletry items for shelters and by practicing random acts of kindness. Participants in the "T-WELL-ve Days of Christmas" wellness project collected over 300 toiletry and non-perishable food items for the Sojourners Shelter.

Tracking. Those who design wellness programs want to capture as much data from participants as possible, but those who participate want the process to be simple. The www.wvmi.org/steps web site satisfies both wishes. Wellness program participants are assigned a password to enter the site and track their points or miles.

The wellness coordinator and network administrator have daily access to the site and can issue congratulations to the leading team and challenges to the “underdog” as appropriate. The site is also very adaptable to programs that track steps, points for healthy eating, etc. This has been a very helpful tool that is well received by employees.

Most Popular Programs:

Lunch and learn is a scheduled time that staff can get together, have a good lunch, socialize and learn about different health related topics, such as stress management, cholesterol and good nutrition. The presentations are offered at 11:15 am and 12:15 pm to allow all employees to participate. An attendance roster and program evaluation are circulated at each session. Lunch and learn topics are suggested by employees and included as part of the operating plan for the wellness program.

Corporate contests like the “T-WELL-ve Days of Christmas” and “Where in the World” promote friendly competition among the Chesterfield and Northgate sites. As mentioned earlier, the initiation of the www.wvmi.org/steps site has improved program tracking.

Health screenings and on-site preventive services. Bringing health screenings to the work site are popular and effective in encouraging employees to practice prevention. Flu

shots have been offered for several years. This past year, the wellness team included a flu quiz and flu educational materials as part of the effort. The HealthPlace on the Move screening van provided a lipid panel, glucose testing, blood pressure and body composition tests for 48 WVMI employees in March, 2004.

WVMI Wellness: Additional information

WVMI proudly displays its Well Workplace Bronze Award in the company lobby and includes the Kanawha Valley Well Cities logo on its website. These symbols of wellness let first time visitors to WVMI know that promoting a healthy workforce is a priority of the organization. When visitors also see groups of employees leaving the building at lunch time to take walks, or read BMI charts or healthy eating “potty posters” in rest rooms, or find rooms reserved for Weight Watchers or chair massage programs, they see “wellness at work”.

Internally, employees see healthy food options and water coolers in kitchen areas and enjoy monthly Healthy Wednesday fruit days. Employees and their families can participate in a group health plan that promotes wellness by covering preventive health services. Employees at the two work sites (Chesterfield and Northgate) are brought together each month for lunch and learn sessions. The two work sites engage in friendly competitions that encourage employees to adopt healthy behaviors like physical activity and eating fruits and vegetables. In many ways, wellness messages are delivered to WVMI employees on a regular basis.