

★WELCOA

# Member Spotlight

INSPIRATION AND BEST PRACTICES  
FROM ACCOMPLISHED WELCOA MEMBERS

Jason Horay



## JASON HORAY

**TITLE:** Health Promotion Coordinator

**INDUSTRY:** Insurance

**YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY:** 14 years

**EDUCATION:** B.S. Sports Medicine, M.S. Health Promotion, Certified WELCOA Faculty, Certified Athletic Trainer, Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES)

**WELCOA MEMBER SINCE:** 2009

**WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE A CAREER IN HEALTH PROMOTION?** It started with my childhood wish to grow up and be either a baseball superstar or a physician. After obtaining a degree in sports medicine, I made a conscious shift in my career plan. My degree had offered three unique career paths one of which was health promotion. I knew I had made the right choice when I took graduate level classes in behavior change theories and models. I have been hooked ever since.

**WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST DREAM FOR THE INDUSTRY?** My vision is to move beyond the traditional health risk reduction model. This current system confines us. I don't know that we are getting to the root of the problem if our focused goals are only to impact high BP, glucose levels, weight, and program ROI rather than putting energy into people themselves. My dream is to see a more holistic overall health inventory of the employee so we can find the true causes of poor health and make lifestyle changes from there.

Read on to learn more about Jason, and how you can be featured in a WELCOA Member Spotlight.



## Jason Horay of the North Carolina Medical Society (NCMS) Employee Benefit Plan tells us about a unique grant program to improve health for healthcare workers, shares strategies for staying on top of a rapidly changing industry, and provides sage wisdom on the power of having a mentor.

### JASON, TELL US ABOUT THE WELLNESS PROGRAM YOU MANAGE FOR NCMS.

**JASON:** The NCMS Plan is a statewide employee benefits plan designed specifically for North Carolina physicians. It is made up of over 760 medical practices in NC with over 14,000 subscribers and over 23,000 members and has a footprint in every one of North Carolina’s 100 counties. The name of our wellness initiative is Practice Wellness. Practice Wellness provides a one-time financial grant of up to \$15,000 for individual medical practices that develop and implement sustainable, evidenced-based programs. Success in the program is based on achieving “CORE” components that I believe is the roadmap to success. Practice Wellness allows us to assess an

organization’s current situation, come up with a program strategy, then implement, evaluate and manage the program.

### HOW DO MEDICAL PRACTICES TYPICALLY USE THEIR CORE GRANT?

**JASON:** We provide the grant as cash to medical practices, and different practices have used the grant money in different ways. It can be used to incentivize health assessment participation, to be compliant with their annual exams, to pay for tobacco cessation resources or to fund online weight management programs. One practice bought bikes and they have a rental system for employees so they can go out on their lunch hour and cruise around Asheville.

<b>CORE</b> \$25 per enrolled employee	<b>CORE +</b> \$25 per enrolled employee	<b>CORE + MORE!</b> \$50 per enrolled employee
<b>CORE</b> must be completed.	<b>CORE</b> must be completed <b>AND one</b> metric from the following:	<b>CORE</b> must be completed <b>AND one</b> metric from the following:
Meeting with NCMS Plan Promotion Coordinator to review grant program	<b>Participation-based incentive strategy</b> integrated into practice's benefit plan structure	
Create an environment that supports healthy lifestyles. Could include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Executive commitment</b> to establishing a culture of Practice Wellness</li> <li>➤ Establish a <b>wellness advisory committee</b> and</li> <li>➤ Implement a <b>written wellness policy</b></li> </ul>	<b>Adopt a 100% tobacco-free policy</b>	
Health Assessment completion by 75% of enrolled employees.	Health Assessment completion by 75% of enrolled employees with <b>biometric screening</b> .	
Host a 30-minute seminar with 50% participation by employees tailored to the needs of the practice.	<b>Annual preventive care exam and/or age/gender appropriate screenings</b> completed by 75% of enrolled employees.	

## HOW DO YOU ASSESS AN ORGANIZATION'S READINESS TO BEGIN THE PRACTICE WELLNESS PROCESS?

**JASON:** When I go into a medical practice, I know what bare bones organizational framework is needed for the practice to be successful; this includes their appetite for wellness, the time they feel they can devote to the program, and the amount of effort they are interested in putting into a program's success. Even the busiest organizations can free up the time and staff to be successful with Practice Wellness if they believe that wellness is a priority. If not, I know it is on the back burner for them, and that's ok.

## HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF PRACTICE WELLNESS?

**JASON:** We initially focused on program engagement, risk reduction and behavior change improvement; our measures were policy development, annual exam and preventive screening adherence, health assessment completion and biometric screenings. As the program matures, we are expanding our definition of success to include evaluating impacts on health status, environmental level changes, quality of life measurements and organizational culture. The NCMS Plan is positioning future programming to demonstrate a cost savings through reducing risk.

## WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE PRACTICE WELLNESS PROGRAM?

**JASON:** The plan continues to enhance offerings through benefit design that drives wellness, supports behavior change and ultimately allows members to lead healthier lives. Two specific examples are the Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less weight management program and our brand new referral network of dietitians across the state that will provide counseling and presentations to neighboring practices. What makes these programs unique is that we were able to develop and integrate them into our benefit plan offerings.

## TELL US MORE ABOUT HOW YOU INTEGRATED THE WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN INTO BENEFITS DESIGN.

**JASON:** Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less is a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, and NC State. I started the relationship by connecting with the coordinator of the program for the state. I vetted out the program, looked at the value that it would add to our members, and negotiated a price. Together we made the determination that the program would be a covered benefit at no cost to the member. So, we will absorb the cost of the per-person per-price program, and the claims associated with utilization will go against each practices' utilization. We uniquely designed the benefit so



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the employee has "skin in the game." They have to pay \$30 upfront and if they attend 10 out of the 15 weekly sessions, they get that \$30 back.

## WHAT HAS WORKED BEST FOR YOU IN HEALTH PROMOTION?

**JASON:** I know organizations use all sorts of incentives (or penalties) to drive engagement and success, but over the 14 years of doing this work, I have found that most people still respond to the almighty dollar. I often apply a behavioral economics framework which looks at the effects of psychological, social, cognitive and emotional factors on a person's wellness decisions.

## DO YOU SEE INCENTIVES BEING MORE EFFECTIVE THAN PREMIUM DIFFERENTIALS OR OTHER "PENALTIES"?

**JASON:** Pure incentives work but it is all about how you communicate it. We are really seeing that the effectiveness of the incentive or differential rests on how it is positioned in communications to employees. Also, we have strict rules about the types of incentives we support at NCMS Plan. Our medical practices can incent the wide range of programs

or outcomes but the incentive has to be integrated into the benefit plan. We strongly encourage cost neutrality because if not, the program will not be sustainable.

## HOW DO YOU CONTINUE TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE PROGRAM STRATEGIES?

**JASON:** The [health promotion] industry is growing rapidly and aggressively. Every time I turn on my computer there is a new product or company popping up. I unfortunately don't have time to review and vet all these groups so I generally turn to WELCOA to see what they say is the latest and greatest. WELCOA incentive campaigns, presentations, surveys, tools, trainings, and resources guide me along the wellness promotion path.

## WHAT WELCOA RESOURCES HAVE HELPED YOU MOST?

**JASON:** I always make time to read [WELCOA] case studies and expert interviews because they provide real-life examples that I had not previously explored. Several times I have downloaded turnkey incentive programs because they are ready to implement and customizable to different organization sizes. My favorite is *HealthTrip*.



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## LET'S TALK ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE WHO WANTED TO BE A LEADER IN HIS/HER FIELD?

**JASON:** My advice to future leaders is to identify a mentor, align with a higher purpose, and be aware of your influence as an individual. P.S. I really love when someone can creatively interject a little humor and fun into the field of wellness.

## HOW DO YOU FIND A MENTOR?

**JASON:** You know, I think everything just has to come together in the universe. It is not like I went out seeking a mentor. But, I think it just happens naturally. My current boss, Gary Bossert, is my mentor. He gets it, he and I work well together, and we are aligned in our thinking and our approach to both life and work. A mentoring relationship is a partnership.

## WHAT HAS HAVING A GOOD MENTOR DONE FOR YOU IN YOUR CAREER?

**JASON:** Confidence, a sounding board for support, and the courage to take risks. <sup>1.4.3</sup> ★

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Submit Your Inquiry To:  
[questions@welcoa.org](mailto:questions@welcoa.org)



Identify a mentor, align with a higher purpose, and be aware of your influence as an individual.





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