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Companies find multitude of services for directing employee health, activity

by Tiffany Gann

For many businesses, wellness programs are a driving force to keep a positive work atmosphere.

By utilizing providers of health services like SimplyWell, companies are enabling their employees to live healthier lifestyles and at the same time, creating a companywide team.

"Wellness is a culture change," said Helen Adamson, director of human resources at Warren Distribution. "Warren has been promoting wellness for well over 25 years with corporate sponsorship and insurance discounts for healthy lifestyles."

Dependent on the company, employers can choose several combinations of programs to best fit their company's culture.

"We offer several different types of programs and initiatives at Midlands Choice," said Rachel Rau, human resources senior generalist. "They range from formal benefits offered on an annual basis such as our health screenings with SimplyWell, flu shot clinic and smoking cessation program, to our quarterly health and fitness reimbursement for employees to use for qualified expenses related to health and fitness."

For RDG Planning & Design, following a wellness program fits in with the company's philosophy as an architectural firm.

"Through our relationships with clients, residents, RDG staff, strategic partners and our surrounding community, our vision is to help people change and/or reinforce their lifestyle by promoting optimum health; in the projects we design, in our office practices and in our individual lifestyles," said President John Birge. "Optimum health is defined as a balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, financial, environmental and intellectual health — focusing our efforts on

enhancing awareness, changing behavior and crafting environments that support good health practices."

Setting up a wellness program at your company is one thing, but seeing results is another. Each business can attest to different positive changes among employees.

"It is our perspective that a healthy lifestyle results in less sickness, medical expense, as well as overall employee satisfaction," Adamson said.

Warren Distribution has been successful with the program; it recently won a gold level Well Workplace Award for the Wellness Councils of America.

Other motivations for employees are translated through health insurance benefits.

"There is a noticeable improvement in our claims history that we attribute to our wellness initiatives which in turn creates opportunities for better premiums," Rau said. "In addition, our employees are more motivated, productive and engaged."

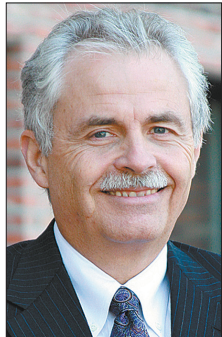
By meeting the requirements of the SimplyWell program, employees may only have to pay \$50 of their premium.

Services like annual physicals and monthly visits from a nurse help to monitor the health of employees.

"SimplyWell has provided us educational tools and annual health assessment services, helping us to obtain quantitative results as to how we are doing," Birge said. "These results help us to evaluate how we are doing in the form of health scores individually and as a firm."

Beyond regular checkups, companies are offering programs that incorporate entertainment.

"We also offer periodic programs such as Weight Watchers at work, walking clubs, "Biggest Loser"-type challenges, EAP train-



Birge



Helen Adamson, director of human resources at Warren Distribution, right, and Amanda Lewis, human resources generalist.

ing sessions, blood pressure checks, and other fun activities such as fruit and veggies day and informational lunch and learns," Rau said. "All of these programs combined offer our employees a wide variety of options along with the resources and support to take control of their health."

With offerings like a fully equipped fitness facility, Warren Distribution allows for employees to have 24/7 access to the facility as well as programs for weight loss and smoking cessation.

"Wellness initiatives are something we do for them, not to them," said Adamson. "Our goal is just to be supportive and offer a variety of programs to our multiple locations

and hope that it sticks."

Named as one of the Best Places to Work by the Greater Omaha Chamber, RDG often caters healthy meal options from Patrick's Market and sponsors community runs, walks and bicycle competitions.

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