

## BroMenn Healthcare and the Town of Normal: Partners in a Win/Win

By Jill Stratton

*The most recent issue of Cul-ti-vate talked about the value of the employer as customer through partnerships that proactively manage the health of employees. This month, we look at one of those partnerships—a wellness initiative started by BroMenn Healthcare and the town of Normal, Illinois. It's a collaboration that has proactively managed the employee health of Normal residents, resulting in a win/win for the employer and its employees.*

The partnership began in August 2006 with Normal and BroMenn Healthcare's Healthcare-to Organizations (H2O) program. The latter provides comprehensive onsite wellness and occupational health solutions for area employers.

This collaboration started with a simple goal: to enhance the Town's employee benefits by providing consistent on-site wellness services and resources for the Town's approximately 360 union and non-union employees, spouses and retirees as an enhanced benefit.

The Town has always provided a generous wellness benefit for its employees in the form of reimbursement for wellness activities (club memberships, health screenings, etc).

*Live Well*, the resulting wellness initiative, is administered by the BroMenn wellness department and staffed 20 hours onsite by Marcy Kaufman, Certified Wellness Program Manager. *Live Well* offers preventative health measures, individual and team incentive programs, daily/weekly health education, onsite exercise classes, and one-on-one consultations coupled with return on investment tracking.

Kaufman says the scope of the onsite services is proactive and outreaching by bringing the programs to where the people are located.

"I make sure to visit all 13 sites from the various maintenance buildings to all three shifts at the three firehouses every other month, totaling 22 onsite visits."

This extensive and broad ranging on-site approach has produced positive results. When we fast-forward to today, we find that the partnership has indeed enhanced the culture of wellness in the Town of Normal with the proof in the data and personal employee stories. Over the years, the following data has been tracked:

- Participation levels

- Health risk data points (blood pressure, blood lipids, diet/exercise/stress habits, smoking, etc.)
- Insurance claims

Two-year results include:

- 9 out of 10 health indicators (blood pressure, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, triglycerides and others) improved in test measurements.
- Health insurance premiums have increased 0 percent and 2 percent in the past two years (the end of year 1 and year 2). In previous years, premiums increased about 8 percent per year, saving taxpayers thousands of dollars per year.
- There has been a reduction in the number of “catastrophic” health claims (including stroke and heart attack).
- A surplus of funds in the Town’s self-insurance pool is being used to reduce out-of-pocket costs for those served by Town health insurance.

But, as Kaufman points out, some of the best outcomes can’t be measured through data but rather through personal success stories of the town’s employees.

“I’ve had employees who had not seen a doctor in years who are now under the regular care of a physician. In one case, the employee has started exercising, eating right and has since lost a substantial amount of weight. This has resulted in the reduction of her blood pressure and diabetes medications and she says that she is feeling great about herself and life. You can’t put a dollar amount on that.”



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