

Berrien Mental Health Authority Has Team Spirit

Initiative in Brief

Berrien Mental Health Authority's worksite wellness program was born from a suggestion made from their insurance agent. The agent mentioned that a comprehensive worksite wellness program might help to reduce their insurance premiums. A program that could reduce premiums and increase employee health seemed like a win-win solution for everyone, and the wellness program was created!

One of the first activities of the newly formed wellness committee was to conduct a health screening and employee interest survey. The results from the screening and interest surveys helped the committee plan future activities.

Another key component of the wellness program is the implementation of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP offers individual, couples, and family therapy. Also, four training sessions were planned with topics such as Stress Management, Nutrition 101, Life Without Diets, Workplace Violence, Balancing Work and Home, and Principles of Physical Fitness.

To encourage physical activity, the company implemented a virtual *Walk to Mackinaw Island* program. Fifty-two employees on thirteen teams participated in the challenge. Participants accumulate points based on the type and length of physical activity they do. Everyone that participates receives a pedometer at the beginning of the challenge and a small prize is given to one team at the end of each week. A wrap up party is held at the end of the challenge, at which time the teams that finished their trek to Mackinaw Island will go into a drawing for a chance to win prizes.

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Benefits

Noted benefits of the program are:

- High blood pressure and diabetes detected in employees previously undiagnosed.
- Generated healthy competition and team spirit among employees.
- Positive feedback from employees leading to a boost in morale.

"We received positive feedback from the employees about the wellness clinic, and they are very enthusiastic about participating in the Walk to the Island."

Becky Scott
Human Resource Manager

Lessons Learned

- Having good communication within the company helps keep everyone motivated.
- Employees enjoy the fun of light competition between teams.
- Providing employee assistance programs can provide employees with tools to maintain mental wellness.

Cost: Pedometers, incentives, cholesterol kits, EAP
Risk Factor: Physical inactivity, diabetes, and other chronic disease risk factors
Impact/Reach: 50 employees
Business/Sector: Mental health/human services