



Spotlight on Baylor College of Medicine

Large healthcare employer, Baylor College of Medicine, wins big with challenges.

Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) continues to grow and expand its wellness horizons. By encouraging employee involvement, emphasizing its commitment to wellness and incorporating new fitness technology, BCM has changed how its employees and other companies approach their own personal health and wellness.

Vitality spoke with Jesse Gavin, Wellness Coordinator, to learn more about Baylor College of Medicine's 10-month challenge, what it took to win Houston's Healthiest Employer Award for large companies and its plans for the future.

Congratulations on winning the 2015 Houston Healthiest Employer Award!

Thank you. There is an extensive application process to be considered for the Houston's Healthiest Employer Award. Along with Vitality, we worked with our medical and pharmacy carriers for some of the required information to apply for the award.

The award covers different components of a wellness program. One of the major components is leadership support, as well as technology integration, the wellness team, and outcomes. The regional award is part of a larger award. Since we won this

regional award, we are actually in the running for the Healthiest 100 Employers in the Nation.

What would you say are your best practices when it comes to wellness?

I think one of our best practices is our wellness program's integration and collaboration with other departments within Baylor College of Medicine and also other partners such as our medical and pharmacy carriers. Our program is not just diet and exercise, but includes other components that may not typically be addressed including financial, social and environmental wellness. This integration allows us to bring everyone into the program and yet focus on one message of wellness.

What was your health culture before you initiated your wellness program?

Before the implementation of the wellness program, it was pieces of what we are doing now, but the messaging was scattered and not focused. We were somewhat ahead of the norm with regard to wellness, but there were so many different people in the organization trying



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to do their own programs. One of our primary goals when we started the program was to bring employees together to create a culture of wellness by sending the same message relating to health and well-being. Integrating BCM BeWell with Vitality last year really brought BCM together and gave us the ability to focus our wellness message in one virtual space to get that message out. Plus, people can see a recap of their wellness information in one spot — kind of like an electronic medical record.

How has your overall experience been so far?

I really enjoy having the opportunity to award points for wellness challenges, activities and behaviors. Our wellness initiatives can also support our benefit programs as well as other programs offered by a variety of departments. We have the opportunity to see the data across multiple spectrums and evaluate the results. It helps us build a program to meet the employees' needs and interests. I think this is crucial when it comes to gaining employees' trust and buy-in to BCM BeWell. It really takes a combination of both, the evaluation of data and feedback from employees, to build a great program.

you are most proud of?

I'm proud of our Getaway to Good Health Challenge which we run through Vitality. It's a 10-month challenge and the premise is to virtually walk from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston to Panama City, Florida. We wanted to get people up and moving and we really have some people that are doing awesome. We hit the half-way point— New Orleans— and out of the 2,000+ participants, we've had about 716 virtually walk to New Orleans. We just had a big Mardi Gras celebration with our participants.

There are also "checkpoints" along the road to Panama City. For example, employees were required to complete the Vitality Health Review and one Nutrition Course before the half-way mark. During the second half of the challenge, employees are required to complete the Vitality Mental Well-being Review and the Vitality Physical Activity Review.

We've seen an uptake in walking and general physical activity. Employees are walking from building to building, walking the hallways, and using the stairs. We have really seen a cultural shift moving toward walking meetings or taking a break during the day and walking.

What are some of the results



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Do you have any plans for future awards? How will you continue to expand your wellness program?

We want to build on our success. In the future, we would love to open a program up to spouses and students of the medical school. We want to get everyone involved.

