



Employers and hospitals *Partnering* for better care



COLUMBUS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL: OPERATION OVERHAUL 2.0 *MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN EMPLOYEES' HEALTH; LOWERING EMPLOYERS' HEALTH CARE COSTS*

Wisconsin hospitals and health systems share a common mission to improve access to care. That is why they are forming partnerships with local employers to develop onsite services, making it easier for employees to meet with a physician, nurse or wellness coach. These partnerships are helping employers hold the line on health care costs, prevent workplace injuries and reduce worker's compensation costs. All while creating a healthier community and with that, a healthier Wisconsin.

Over the next few weeks, the Wisconsin Hospital Association will share a series of articles that illustrate the innovative and effective programs that are being created in our state that are keeping employees, and their families, healthier.




Columbus Community Hospital's Operation Overhaul 2.0 program is making a real difference in the health of local companies' workers.

Columbus Community Hospital (CCH) is a 25-bed acute care hospital located in Columbus. It employs over 300 workers, and a network of about 100 volunteers helps in a variety of areas. The hospital sponsors this program in partnership with nearby businesses, providing options for physical activities and learning experiences all in hopes of nudging their workers toward healthier lifestyles.

The program, administered by on-site CCH staff, takes a preventive approach to keep more expensive health issues from cropping up down the road. In the long run, programs like these can help reduce the strain on businesses' health care budgets, according to Ann Roundy, vice president of employee services at CCH.

While the program aims to push back on Columbia County's elevated rate of obesity—nearly 35 percent in 2015, compared to the statewide rate of around 30 percent—its ultimate goal is to enact long-term health and wellness changes, Roundy says.





But making these decisions to upend decades-old habits doesn't just happen overnight. That's why the program is spread out into four month-long 'intensive periods' in which CCH aims to get at some of the core pillars of wellness: physical activity, overall body weight, nutrition and good lifestyle habits.

These healthy habits can range from better management of stress and anxiety to getting enough sleep, as well as exercising regularly and even being smart about finances. When participants begin the program, they take an online wellness survey and a nutrition knowledge quiz to gauge their starting knowledge. Initial measurements are also taken for things such as blood pressure, height, weight, BMI, waist size, sit-ups and push-ups, flexibility and stability. All these tests are done again at the end, to see how fitness and understanding are improved by taking part in the various program activities—walk/run events, educational sessions, cooking demonstrations and more.

This iteration of Operation Overhaul 2.0 runs from October 2017 through July 2018. Points are awarded for participating in these activities, and can be redeemed for prizes such as exercise equipment, cooking items, digital scales or even a one-year pass to the Wisconsin State Park System. Points are also displayed online so participating companies can engage in some friendly competition. Schuman Printers and American Packaging, two manufacturers based in Columbia County, will take part this year. Last year, the two participating companies were E.K. Machine Co. and Robbins Manufacturing. In the first iteration of the program, Columbus Chemical, Didion Milling and Schuman Printers all participated.

Altogether, participants lost 151 inches from their waistlines and 343 pounds, increased sit-ups by over 294 and pushups by 329, improved average heart rate, decreased blood pressure, and improved flexibility and stability.

Other success stories include a knee surgery patient finishing a 5K walk, a parent learning to cook healthier options for the whole family, an individual dropping weight and no longer requiring blood pressure medicine, and many more.

"Employees' perception of the workplace has been improved," Roundy said. "Employers are allowing them to do many of these things on work time—it lets them feel more valuable and part of the team as well."

This profile appears in the Wisconsin Technology Council's recent publication, "Taking the Pulse - How Quality Healthcare Builds a Better Bottom Line." See the Tech Council publication here: <http://wisconsintechcouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Taking-the-Pulse-Healthcare-Quality-Report.pdf>

12/7/2017