



HEALTHMILES

CASE STUDY:

Harlandale Independent School District

CHALLENGE:

Identify a Motivating Wellness Program that Would Reach and Impact an Entire Workforce

The Harlandale Independent School District is a Pre-K through grade 12 public school system located in San Antonio, Texas, and is comprised of 25 school campuses and approximately 14,000 students. The district employs more than 2,000 individuals, including administrators, teachers and support staff.

Harlandale's human resources and benefits team was challenged by the district's continually rising health care costs. When evaluating its health care claims, it became apparent that a significant percentage of Harlandale's employees were experiencing challenges with preventable conditions such as obesity, hypertension and diabetes, which were negatively impacting the district's health care costs.

Harlandale's human resources and benefits teams made it a department goal to seek out a wellness program that would motivate its employees to make healthier lifestyle choices and, in turn, help reduce overall health care costs.

The concept of a wellness program was not new to Harlandale. The organization employed short-term wellness programs in the past with only limited success, either because they were short-lived or only applied to a subset of its employee base.

"We learned from our past and knew if we truly wanted a wellness program that worked, it had to be a long-term program that was built on great substance," said Fred Garza, director of human resources at Harlandale. "We weren't interested in a dime-a-dozen program that simply gave out some free T-shirts as the motivational tool. Rather, we were seeking a program that would excite our employees and inspire them to exercise and make positive choices about their health."

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Director of Human Resources

Garza and his team also recognized that if its new wellness program was going to positively impact the school district's health care costs, it had to be one that appealed to and engaged its entire staff. To achieve this, Harlandale sought a turn-key health and productivity solution that was easy and cost-effective to roll out to all of the district's 25 campuses.

Armed with a thorough understanding of Harlandale's challenges, the district's health insurance provider introduced them to Virgin HealthMiles.



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SOLUTION:

A Program that Measures, Motivates and Rewards

Harlandale was drawn to Virgin HealthMiles not only because it was a proven health and productivity program, but it was one that promised ongoing support and commitment.

“So many times vendor relationships end after the sale, but Virgin HealthMiles has remained committed to our initiative every step of the way,” said Garza. “The company’s ongoing and proactive communication and its innovative challenges keep our employees engaged. The program is racing along, thanks to Virgin HealthMiles’ continued support.”

Virgin HealthMiles’ real-time tracking and measurement tools were also a key decision factor for Harlandale. Harlandale appreciated how the combination of individual Virgin HealthMiles GoZone® pedometers along with the HealthZone® measurement stations keep its employees informed about their progress and fitness goals.

“When we kicked off the Virgin HealthMiles program, the biggest surprise for so many of our employees was what they learned at the HealthZone stations,” said Jane Eutsler, benefits administrator at Harlandale. “So many people didn’t have the faintest idea what their blood pressure was. But now they do, and those who have high blood pressure are working to bring it down.”

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The Harlandale team also witnessed how these measurement tools, coupled with Virgin HealthMiles’ fitness challenges and rewards program, truly motivate employees and keep them on track with making healthy behavior changes. Harlandale’s internal and Virgin HealthMiles’ program-wide steps challenges combine to encourage employees to stay focused on increasing their physical activity. And the program’s rewards give employees extra incentive to meet program milestones, providing them the opportunity to earn up to \$150 per year.

Another appealing aspect of the Virgin HealthMiles program is its online program portal, the LifeZone®, which can be easily accessed by all of Harlandale’s 2,000 employees either at work or at home. By logging into their secure, personal accounts, employees can set their goals, track their progress, receive ongoing feedback and motivation, participate in fun challenges and competitions with other district employees from different schools in addition to seeing the challenge rankings, and have opportunities for social engagement.



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Harlandale also appreciates the flexibility of the Virgin HealthMiles program and its ability to integrate into the district's other wellness programs. The district recently hosted a "Relay for Life" event and HealthMiles members earned bonus points for their participation. Additionally, the district has organized a variety of special interest fitness activities for its employees and has seen participation increase since implementing the Virgin HealthMiles program due to the employees' renewed enthusiasm for physical activity.

RESULTS:

Heightened Energy Around Wellness, District-wide

Harlandale is nearing the completion of its first year with the Virgin HealthMiles program and is already reporting success.

During the first year, approximately 35 percent of Harlandale's employees have enrolled in the Virgin HealthMiles program, well above the industry average of 15 percent wellness program participation. Additionally, since the program started, 30% of employees who were previously inactive or not getting enough daily physical activity are now active.

The district plans to expand the program in its second year and has several initiatives in place to continue to build adoption and engagement levels, including launching a company newsletter highlighting employees' wellness success stories. It also plans to make one of its two HealthZone stations a mobile unit, which will travel to campuses throughout the district during the year. By the end of its second year, the district hopes to bring its participation level to 60 percent, nearly doubling first-year rates.

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Jane Eutsler
Benefits Administrator

Eutsler attributes much of the program's success to the commitment from the district's superintendent and his leadership team. "There's a great deal of buzz about Virgin HealthMiles throughout our organization," said Eutsler. "Our wellness program is getting people out and moving like never before, and we're hearing great weight loss and wellness stories. We are really excited to take our program to new heights in the upcoming year."