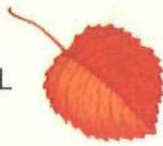


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A SYSTEM FOR EMPLOYEE FITNESS

Under a new systemwide plan, every facility in the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Health System, Nazareth, KY, will help its employees achieve healthy life-styles. Committed to reshaping the healthcare environment to promote well-being and prevention, in May 1994 the system convened a nine-member, multidisciplinary Health Promotion Task Force, which included representatives from each system facility. The task force crafted recommendations its affiliates could use to create their own employee wellness programs, which are to be in place by August 1996.

KEY ELEMENTS

The task force began by identifying key elements of an ideal health promotion and wellness program (see **Box**, p. 49). With these in mind, the group then visited nine existing employee wellness programs and incorporated what they learned into their recommendations.

As quickly as possible, the facilities will phase in the following components, focusing first on a health assessment of all employees.

Health Appraisal All facilities use the Wellsource Personal Wellness Profile Health Risk Appraisal. The task force selected this tool because it is holistic, allows for individual goal setting, and produces comprehensive reports about an employee group's risk factors.

Incentive Plan Facilities are developing incentives

*Sisters of
Charity of
Nazareth
Health
System
Makes
Wellness a
Top Priority*

BY MARK W. DUNDON

for participation in the wellness program, which is optional. One incentive program offers employees a 25 percent reduction in their premium contribution to their health insurance plans if they participate. Another offers prizes or cash awards.

Core Programs The system encourages its affiliates to include the following core programs:

- A nutrition component that offers cholesterol and weight reduction programs, nutritional counseling and education, and chronic disease management

- An exercise and fitness component that provides aerobic exercise, strength training, and

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SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Health System, Nazareth, KY, has 8,800 employees, 2,488 licensed beds, and 60,000 admissions annually. It comprises the following facilities:

- St. Vincent Infirmary Medical Center, Little Rock, AR
- Flaget Memorial Hospital, Bardstown, KY
- St. Joseph Hospital, Lexington, KY
- Marymount Medical Center, London, KY
- Nazareth Home, Louisville, KY
- Our Lady of Peace Hospital, Louisville, KY
- Saints Mary & Elizabeth Hospital, Louisville, KY
- Memorial Hospital, Chattanooga, TN.

The system also manages Our Lady of the Way Hospital, Martin, KY, and leases Conway County Hospital, Morriston, AR.



Mr. Dundon is president, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Health System, Nazareth, KY.

SPIRITUAL HEALING

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STARTING A HOLISTIC HEALTH CENTER

For anyone launching a holistic health center, Sr. Schuster recommends obtaining the following:

- Commitment from administration
- Support from the medical staff
- A credible director
- An advisory committee that includes top managers, physicians, and community representatives
- Fund-raising expertise

The center's staff addresses stress management, help in dealing with terminal illness, the mind-body-spirit approach to cardiac rehabilitation, headache management, mind-body-spirit treatment of cancer, and chronic pain treatment.

Yearly operating expenses are about \$250,000, and the center is looking for foundation grants to augment income derived from fees for services and classes.

FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

Sr. Schuster sees the Franciscan Wholistic Health Center as a model for the future of healthcare. As inpatient costs soar and managed care grows, she predicts a strong demand for therapies that use the enormous healing potential people have within themselves. Sr. Schuster recently resigned as president of the system but plans to continue as president of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor Foundation and to devote more time to integrating holistic concepts of health into our mainstream healthcare delivery system.

Studies continue to confirm the benefits of complementary therapies, she says, and, in time, insurers will cover them. The center will realize its ultimate goal: to enhance the practice of medicine by helping patients tap into their spiritual core, which is, as Sr. Schuster says, "the core of real healing."
—Judy Cassidy

EMPLOYEE FITNESS

Continued from page 45

rehabilitation services

- A spirituality and general well-being component that emphasizes meditation and prayer, stress management, alternative therapies, and education on topics such as self-esteem, blood pressure control, smoking cessation, substance abuse, and time management


- A medical self-care component that assists participants in making appropriate healthcare decisions

FUTURE HEALTH PROMOTION EFFORTS

The system has focused its efforts on its employees because healthcare employees have historically used medical services at a far higher rate than any other employee group. We believe that if we can demonstrate a significant

decrease in medical claims as one measure of improved health—and also document improved attendance and job satisfaction—we can use this information to attract the broader community to our programs. Our experience with our employees will help us create a more effective approach.

An advantage of the systemwide program is that affiliates can learn from each other. Although the affiliates will promote healthy communities in different ways, depending on the circumstances in their communities, all system organizations need to direct more effort toward improving their employees' health status. □

 For more information, contact Mark Dundon at 502-349-6350.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

The Health Promotion Task Force followed these guidelines as it developed the recommendations for the employee wellness programs of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Health System:

- Programs must be tailored to each individual's specific goals and needs.
- The program must place equal emphasis on individuals' physical, spiritual, and psychological well-being.
- The program must help employees understand the importance of their personal health to the overall health of a specified community (e.g., employee group, insured individuals, local community).
 - Top management must support and participate in the program.
 - The program must include research and monitoring to demonstrate effectiveness.
 - A self-care component should motivate participants to take an active role in their care.
 - The program should emphasize proper nutritional habits and the training of dietitians.
 - Collaboration with other organizations is essential to avoid "reinventing the wheel."
 - The system should encourage the development of professional staff who can implement the program throughout the organization.