



Health Improvement Success Story

Port of Houston Authority



The Port of Houston is made up of the Port of Houston Authority and the 150-plus private industrial companies along the Houston Ship Channel. With some 700 employees, the port authority and its neighbors along the ship channel are a large and vibrant component of the regional economy.

Port of Houston's wellness strategy not only improved employee health in several high-risk areas in one year, it also reduced medical cost by 11%.

Cigna began its relationship with the Port of Houston in 2009, offering a health benefits plan that included HMO and Open Access Plus plans, as well as a KelseyCare HMO, offered through a partnership with Kelsey-Seybold and Cigna. Kelsey-Seybold Clinic is Houston's largest community-based physician group, offering the services of more than 300 physicians in over 40 medical specialties in 18 clinic locations throughout the greater Houston area.

As a key strategy in its benefits plan, the Port of Houston looked to Cigna to help it create a corporate culture of wellness that would increase employees' participation in their health improvement and reduce related medical costs. By the end of 2010, with the right health and wellness programs in place, the organization saw improvements in several high-risk health areas and successfully reduced its medical costs by 11%.

2009: A culture of wellness begins

The Port of Houston began its health and wellness program with an employee survey. Its results indicated that employees wanted to learn more about their health, including opportunities for improvement. Following the survey, Cigna partnered with the Kelsey Wellness for Life Team to organize an onsite Health Fair that included:

- **Biometric screenings.** Tests for blood pressure, body mass index, and glucose and cholesterol levels
- **Health assessments.** Online questionnaire creates a personalized report with details about an employee's most important health issues

The screening and assessment results indicated risk factors for blood pressure, obesity and diabetes. Low physical activity and moderate tobacco use were also evident. Using this information, educational communications targeting these issues were created, and the following onsite wellness campaigns were introduced:

- Healthy Steps to Weight Loss
- Quit Today tobacco cessation
- Preventive care and onsite flu shots
- Strength & Resilience
- Six-week walking program

Finally, to begin to create the culture of wellness within the organization, the Port of Houston captured its commitment to wellness in a mission statement and logo, and introduced it to all employees via a detailed communication plan.



2010–2011: Efforts continue to better understand and improve health

The Port of Houston began its second year of wellness by offering a second health fair with biometric screenings and health assessments. This year there were also incentives for completing the assessment, including a Wii raffle.

While the high risks identified through the health assessment and biometric screenings continued to be the same as those identified in 2009, results did show employees improving their cholesterol levels, blood pressure and diabetes. Monthly communications continued to focus on these areas, as well as promote the following onsite programs:

- 12 Weeks to Wellness Challenge with an onsite coach available at two locations
- Diabetes lectures
- Preventive care and flu shot campaign with onsite flu shots
- Quit Today tobacco cessation campaign with an incentive for completing
- Eating Healthy During the Holiday lectures and communications, including the Maintain No Gain challenge during November and December

As the Port of Houston learned about its employee health risks – and health improvements – Cigna and The Kelsey Wellness for Life Team continued to help the organization develop the necessary tools to build its culture of wellness. A third health fair was held in 2011. This year, incentives were offered to employees who completed the biometric screenings and health assessment, as well as to those who participated in and completed a six-week walking program.

The following wellness initiatives also took place in 2011:

- Monthly lunchtime learning sessions, with employee participation ranging from 70–90 participants per session. Topics included eating healthy in the fast food lane, women's and men's health, cholesterol, pre-diabetes sugar shock and blood pressure.
- A pilot program for The Full Plate Diet had 20 participants meeting weekly with an onsite facilitator to increase employees' understanding about good nutrition and improve their eating behaviors.
- Annual flu shots

What did the Port of Houston learn?

As a result of fairs, incentives and other onsite wellness programs, 16% of all employees have completed a health assessment and 45% have registered for online health-coaching tools. Even with a successful 11% reduction in medical costs, the Port of Houston realizes that these efforts are just the beginning. Cigna and the Kelsey Wellness for Life Team will continue to work with the organization to support its culture of wellness, helping it improve the health and well-being of its employees, and benefit from better health and lower medical costs.



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