**A. Cover Sheet Information:**

         Case Study Title: **Y Weight**: **Progressive Incentive Programs reduce costs and increase employee engagement and productivity**

         Case Study Category: **Organizational Design**

         Jurisdiction Name: **Manatee County Government**

         County Manager Name: **Ed Hunzeker**

         Would you like the application to be considered for an Innovation Award? **Yes**

         Would you like the application to be considered for our Rapid Fire Session? **Yes**

         Project Leader (Primary Contact for case study notification)

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**B. Synopsis**

Manatee County Government operates a unique self-funded health plan that was implemented back in 2006 and has directly tied preventative care, wellness and health management to plan level eligibility.  Even prior to 2006, Manatee County Board of County Commissioners were forward thinking and invested in services and programs that would help employees and their dependents become healthier and therefore more productive in their work. A culture of health was created in Manatee County many years ago, and continually, the Board and the Administration support additional initiatives to drive employee health because they believe in, and our results have proven, its return on investment.

The YourChoice Health Plan was created in 2006 where members (employees and their covered dependents) level of reimbursement (i.e. out of pocket expense) in their medical plan was contingent upon their completion of health risk assessments, lab draws, age-based screenings and wellness exams with Physicians. As members, some for the first time ever, being educated with the realities of their health status, it became even more important for Manatee County to provide very comprehensive, integrated educational and clinical programs to help members make improvements in their health.

As a result, in addition to providing for the preventative care, the County utilizes a team of professionals ranging from Registered Nurses, Dieticians, Pharmacists, Fitness Specialists and Behavioral Health Specialists to create integrated programs that are conducted on-site at County worksites along with various locations in the community. The philosophy of the YourChoice Health Plan at Manatee County is that we wish to address the “whole person” which is why the integrated professional team was established. We realize that our members are not just a person with diabetes or a person with depression, but we all have a combination of needs and the intent of the County was to provide a health management approach that would address all those needs in an integrated fashion as opposed to a siloed approach as is often the case with traditional health or disease management. Additionally, the County believes in the impact of relationships and believes that a face to face approach with a team of people that understands the culture and the people is most effective in eliciting change.

As a result of this, Manatee County YourChoice Health Plan is actively evaluating the claim and clinical data of its population and creating comprehensive incentive programs to engage and drive people towards better health. In 2011, Know Your Numbers was created in order to continue to educate members about their most important “number”: BMI, Blood Pressure, Stress, Tobacco Use and Cardiac Risk. This program was an educational program that offered incentive dollars to reduce premiums and was hugely successful with over 1000 participants. In 2012, the YourChoice Health Plan implemented Change Your Numbers which was designed to move members from just being educated about their numbers to actually changing their numbers. Rather than educational programs, participants were expected to actively engage in ongoing programs that track outcome and performance and the focus this year of Change Your Numbers was on slow, long-term healthy weight loss as it was a support to the program addressed in this case study, Y Weight.

Y Weight was created by the YourChoice Health Plan team with the intention of establishing a progressive incentive program to drive members to reach or maintain healthier weights. The belief of the County was with the expense of an obese employee costing employers in upwards of $73 Billion dollars annually, the County needed to do something to break that cycle in Manatee County. Y Weight is a progressive incentive program that was designed as an 8 year program, with increasing incentive values each year. The intention was to incentivize employees to engage in slow, long-term weight loss in order to maintain that weight loss and eliminate the fluctuations that come with quick weight loss.

Y Weight will reward a member with $400 if they have a healthy BMI and maintain that throughout the year and if a member is outside of the healthy BMI range, but during the year long program loses 5% of his/her weight, they too will be rewarded with the $400. If a member looses weight, but less than 5%, that member earns a smaller reward of $275. For the following year of the program, anyone who earned the $400 will have opportunity to earn $500 for continued maintenance of a healthy BMI or another 5% loss. The key to disinscent the “yo-yo” weight loss that is common in our nation was that the member’s initial weight loss became their new benchmark. The attempt has been to continue to challenge members to lose the weight in a healthy and safe manner and increase the opportunity for reward by continuing to adjust their baseline weight after they lose.

In October 2011, the YourChoice Health Plan Advocates weighed in 2600 members of the health plan (appx. 4000 adult members are eligible to participate) to establish their baseline weight for YWeight, currently, in July 2012, we are in the process of “weighing-out” these members in order to establish their reward. While Manatee County is not yet able to present the outcome, the results appear to be significant. After just three weigh in events, over 300 members have attended and over 90% of them have met their goal to maintain a healthy weight or lose 5%. By looking at the various worksites in the County, you can clearly see the impact this program has had on employees…people are healthier, excited about the program and excited about the benefits at the County. Additionally, as with all other wellness and health management programs, YWeight is available for covered spouses and adult dependents to participate. Therefore, this program has the opportunity to reach over 4000 citizens of Manatee County. Beyond that, we know that when the family decision makers begin to engage in healthy exercise and healthy eating, they begin to role model for their children those behaviors which ultimately will help in the childhood obesity epidemic. So the savings are yet to be determined, but by September 2012, we will have data to report on its impact and over the next few years, we will see the impact on the claim spend.

The costs for the implementation of this program were minimal as internal wellness and health management staff were utilized. The largest cost is the value of the incentive dollar, but the forward thinking Administration at Manatee County realizes that $400 will provide a significant return on investment considering an obese employee can cost an employer between $2000-$3000/year in direct and indirect costs and that health risks and ultimately costs are dramatically reduced with a 5 or 10% weight loss. Just as in 2006, the Administration realized that the investment of providing free preventative care and age-based screening would bring value as evidenced by a 10% reduction claims related to chronic condition and a 22% reduction in inpatient stays, they have realized that the investment in Y Weight will bring significant reward to the County and the tax payers as members gradually become a healthier population.

The obstacles to this program initially have been the manual process of the data management, while we are using an access database to manage the outcome data, the process of enrolling all 2600 members has been daunting and a tremendous amount of manual data entry. Our intention is to explore more technology as we continue the program in order to put our efforts towards helping employees reach their goal and less on the data entry. As was indicated above, there were no private consultants utilized in this project. Manatee County brings the integrated team into the culture of the workforce as they report directly to the Benefits Manager, but are not County employees themselves so there is a clear line between the Team and the employer which helps to promote trust and ensures that health information is protected.

**C. Presentation Style**

The presentation of the Y Weight program will be consisting of several videos of actual employees and the impact the YWeight program had on them both personally and professionally. We will be presenting the outcome data in a way that is engaging and interesting as well as sharing the lessons learned and details about implementation as it is a program that most employers can easily replicate.