



CASE STUDY: INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Situation:

This international airport had a workout room for employees, but no formal program to encourage use or complement the facilities. The workforce is aging, with an average employee age of 45. As part of the city's comprehensive plan, the airport made a commitment to the mayor to improve overall employee satisfaction and decrease lost employee time due to sickness and injury.

Challenge:

The airport runs shifts around the clock and many employees work 12-hour shifts with varying schedules. Some employees perform physically demanding work such as snow removal under tight deadlines and pressure to keep flights running on time. Others contend with high stress in the control tower, where there is no room for error. Wellness committee members are from a variety of different departments, but none of them had experience creating a wellness program, especially one that addressed the complexities of shift work and such a broad range of work-related challenges.

Solution:

The airport hired Health Promotion Management, Inc. (HPMI) to help them implement a wellness program to improve employee health and increase morale. HPMI began by conducting a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) and biometric screening to determine the baseline needs of their population. HRAs and screenings were held at different locations and times to accommodate employees throughout the organization. Based on the results, HPMI worked with the airport's wellness committee to create an operating plan with goals and objectives for the coming year.

The program kicked off with a Passport to Wellness program to promote nutrition and physical activity. Employees earned stamps in "Wellness Passports" for participating in a variety of classes and programs:

- ✓ Walk the State Trail Virtual Experience utilized pedometers to track distance,
- ✓ Take the Restaurant Challenge educated employees and encouraged them to make healthier choices at on-site restaurants,

- ✓ Colorful Choices challenged employees to eat fruits and vegetables from all the colors of the rainbow, and
- ✓ Hit Your Accelerator promoted physical activity and regular exercise.

Employees received their final stamp by participating in the HRA and biometric screenings to gather data on their health status.

Results over 2 years include:

- ✓ An improvement in 12 out of 18 risk categories and six out of 10 clinical tests
- ✓ A 45% reduction in those with high cholesterol (> 240 mg dL)
- ✓ An 8% reduction in those who considered themselves couch potatoes (not getting any activity)
- ✓ A 36% increase in those now getting at least 3 days of exercise a week
- ✓ A shift from high risk to low risk for the 86 employees that participated both years

In addition, the wellness committee has reported a shift toward a healthier culture and greater visibility of the program.



"People are talking about the challenges for months afterwards. To increase participation we implemented an incentive program where employees entered to win things of value, like dinners or plane tickets. This worked well. HPMI is currently running a 13-week weight loss challenge and we have more than 140 people participating. We're very pleased about the interest and positive affects of these challenges on our employees' health."

When we keep people healthy and happy they're able to be present. Our environment includes shift work, 12 hour shifts, physically demanding work and high-stress situations. HPMI has helped us structure and implement a health and wellness program to accommodate our unique challenges. Our wellness committee members are not health and wellness professionals, so HPMI's knowledge of the field and how to get things done has really helped us achieve greater success with our program. They've guided us in forming a strategic plan and given us direction to make sure everything stays on course. We have a good working relationship and they keep a detailed history which is crucial to measuring progress."

-Human Resources Director, International Airport

