

experience

SHARP

Sharp Health Plan's Best Health Program Helps Local Employers Combat Rising Health Care Costs

BY SHARP HEALTH PLAN TEAM

One of the country's top wellness programs is right here in San Diego.

Sharp Health Plan's Best Health Program creates a winning approach to workplace wellness by offering state-of-the-art tools for local employers to engage employees in their own health and well-being through incentive programs, onsite workshops, competitions, biometric screenings and health coaching. Best Health has earned the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Wellness & Health Promotion (WHP) accreditation, one of only a small handful of health programs in the nation to achieve this distinction.

Not a one-size-fits-all approach, Best Health uniquely designs programs based on the health risks associated with each employer. Tailored programs are more relevant to the workforce and, as a result, achieve higher-than-average levels of engagement and satisfaction from participants. For example, the Best Health team found that one of their clients, Evans Hotels, could benefit from a smoking cessation program. Certified health coaches guided employees through the program; now, these same employees share their habit-kicking stories with colleagues, inspiring them to follow suit.

"We are very proud to be able to offer our employees a comprehensive wellness program to assist them on their wellness journey," says Elvia Fernandez, director of benefits administration and employee well-being for Evans Hotels.

Typically, custom wellness programs are reserved for Fortune 500 companies, but Best Health levels the playing field by bringing best-in-class programs to mid-sized employers in San Diego County. Christine Farmer, the Sharp Health Plan account manager for Evans Hotels, says, "We've seen a real desire for employers to take a more active role in the health of their employees through wellness programs, and Best Health allows them to do so. The Evans wellness program is a shining example of that."

In addition to Evans Hotels, Best Health customizes wellness programs for other local employers such as the San Diego Zoo, Viejas Casino, San Diego Municipal Employees Association (MEA), Cal Coast Credit Union and CalPERS.

The statistics back up their work: Employers with mature wellness programs using Best Health engage between one-half and two-thirds of their employee population in some aspect of health improvement, with a 92 percent satisfaction rating among participants in the health-coaching program.

"We're keeping people healthy in a way that's relevant to their needs," says Rachel Heredia, wellness consultant with Best Health. "We give them the tools to make meaningful and lasting changes in their lives." ²⁵



Photo: Kaveri Fields