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UPMC Health Plan Employees Lose “A Ton” of Weight in Workplace Competition so Far

More than 500 employees participating in 'The MyHealth Weight Race'

PITTSBURGH (February 20, 2007) — UPMC Health Plan employees have lost more than 2,000 pounds midway through “The MyHealth Weight Race,” a 12-week workplace team competition that encourages participants to reach sensible weight-loss goals.

More than 500 employees — grouped in teams of five — are participating in the competition, which began in January and continues through April. The program uses percentages of weight loss, not pounds, to make the race challenging to all participants, regardless of their weight-loss goals.

Each Weight Race team is paired with a UPMC Health Plan director, vice president, or other senior-level manager. In addition, each team was assigned a health coach from the Health Promotion department to provide support and advice.

Participants are able to monitor their weight from week to week by using the MyHealth Weight Tracker, an online tool that automatically keeps track of weight changes. Another online tool – the MyHealth Food & Activity Log – provides participants with visual snapshots of their behavior and eating habits and helps create added motivation to eat healthier and become more active.

Each week, participants are invited to attend special 20-minute lunchtime sessions on topics such as “Achieving a Healthy Lifestyle One Step at a Time,” and “Adding Flavor Without Calories.” These sessions, known as MyHealth Connections, will be held throughout the duration of the race.

“I’ve been impressed with the great enthusiasm our employees have shown for this event,” said Diane P. Holder, President of UPMC Health Plan. “This weight loss will have long-term benefits for the health and productivity of our workforce. We’re committed to helping them maintain their success.”

Not only are team members watching their calories, they are also incorporating daily exercise into their lives. They do so by participating in lunchtime walks throughout Downtown, known as “Tuesday Treks,” and by taking the stairs instead of the elevator during their work day.

Across the country, employers are discovering the advantages of helping their employees develop healthier, more productive lifestyles through innovative on-site health programs. The UPMC *MyHealth* initiative is designed to encourage healthy living through a variety of educational and wellness programs, including online tools, discounts on physical fitness activities, and personalized programs on weight management, tobacco dependence, and physical activity.

UPMC Health Plan’s experience with programs such as the *MyHealth* Weight Race, enables it to customize similar programs for employers throughout Western Pennsylvania. These programs are proving popular with employers because they not only promote healthy lifestyle habits, but they also help raise company morale and productivity.

More information on the UPMC *MyHealth* program is available at upmchealthplan.com.

About UPMC Health Plan

UPMC Health Plan, the second-largest health insurer in Western Pennsylvania, is owned by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), one of the nation’s top-ranked health systems. The 2006 *U.S. News & World Report* NCQA listing of “America’s Best Health Plans” ranked UPMC Health Plan # 7 in the nation, making it the highest ranked plan in Pennsylvania. It has also led the nation in breast cancer screening for three consecutive years. The integrated partner companies of the UPMC Insurance Services Division – which includes UPMC Health Plan, Work Partners, EAP Solutions, UPMC *for You* (Medical Assistance), and Community Care Behavioral Health – offer a full range of group health insurance, Medicare, CHIP, Medical Assistance, behavioral health, employee assistance, and workers’ compensation products and services to nearly 1 million members. Our local provider network includes UPMC as well as community providers, totaling more than 80 hospitals and more than 7,000 physicians in a 28-county region.

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