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**COMMUNICATION PLAN:
WellAwards ~ Montana University System Wellness**

Targeted Implementation Date: September 1, 2008

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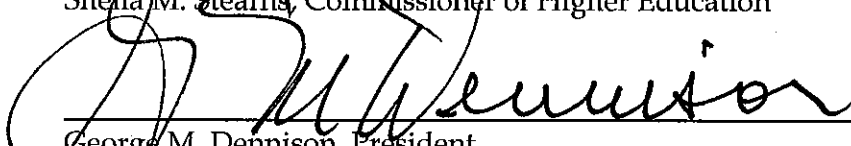


Jill Young, Director, Montana University System Wellness
Date: 7/30/08

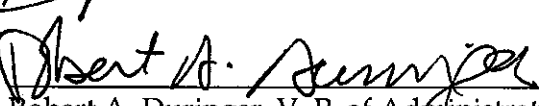
Approved By:



Sheila M. Stearns, Commissioner of Higher Education
Date: 7-28-08



George M. Dennison, President
Date: 8-4-08



Robert A. Durringer, V. P. of Administration and Finance
Date: 31 JULY 08

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PURPOSE

On September 1, 2008, the Montana University System (MUS) Benefits Plan and Wellness Program is rolling out **WellAwards**, a cash-based incentive program for faculty, staff and spouses who are on one of the MUS medical insurance plans.

All executive officers, deans, chairs, directors, and front-line supervisors of The University of Montana must become knowledgeable of this opportunity for faculty and staff to earn a \$100 cash award for participating in health-related activities.

This communication plan provides information and specific guidelines on how to communicate, support and implement this employee benefit.

HISTORY AND IMPACT

Worksite Health Promotion or Wellness programs were initiated almost thirty years ago because of the fact that 70% of all chronic diseases were, and still are, related to lifestyle habits and are mostly preventable. The percent of the most prevalent chronic diseases that are caused by poor lifestyle include diabetes (91%), heart disease (82%), cancer (71%), and stroke (70%). The fact remains that unhealthy behaviors → health risks → chronic diseases → health care costs. Compared with those who are low risk based on lifestyle habits, medium risk individuals have twice the costs, and high risk have five times the costs. Most insurance systems are actually disease plans – not health plans, because 20% of the population is high risk and spending 80% of the resources. If organizations do nothing to offset ever-increasing healthcare expenditures, costs will naturally rise over time because 10 to 20% of low risk individuals will migrate to a higher risk category within just one year. It is widely accepted that it is much more cost-effective over time to keep healthy people low risk, rather than making high risk people healthier.

Over the decades, the Worksite Wellness industry struggled to figure out the best strategies to have a positive impact on employee health and productivity. Most current Wellness programs are now morphing away from the activity-based, information-giving programs popular in the '80s towards a population health management model. This new paradigm encompasses an integrated strategy across the health continuum, including keeping healthy people healthy (low-risk), and managing risky lifestyle behaviors, acute illness or injury, and chronic diseases or disabilities. Currently, 62% of companies are responding to increased health care costs by offering Wellness programs and over 80% of larger employers (500+) now have viable programs. The National Business Group on Health (2005) reported that the benefits of an *effective* Worksite Wellness program included increased employee morale (56%), improved employee health (41%), reduced health care costs (27%), reduced on-the-job accidents (9%), reduced absenteeism (8%), and increased productivity (8%). If businesses, especially those who have self-funded insurance plans (like MUS), focus on a population health management approach, they are more likely to flatten the disease risk factor trend line over time. Simply put, fewer risk factors equals healthier and more productive employees, as well as lowered health care costs.

Recent evidence suggests that most people want to improve their own health (80%). People don't need more information, they just need an incentive to do what they already know they need to do. Worksite Wellness programs don't need to motivate employees to live a healthy lifestyle, they just need to make it easy for them to participate. Per Dee Edington, PhD, Director, Health Management Research Center at the University of Michigan, who conducted the majority of the research over the past twenty years supporting *effective* Worksite Wellness programming, "Engage people – they will figure out what they need to do."

HISTORY AND IMPACT *continued*

In conjunction with the Montana University System (MUS) Benefits Plan, Inter-Units Benefits Committee (IUBC), and Paul Bogumill, Director of Benefits, the unified MUS Wellness Program has implemented many disease prevention strategies since 2004 that reflect current results-oriented Worksite Wellness industry best practices. **WellAwards** was approved as an incentive to steer our plan members towards specific health screenings and healthy behaviors. The actual **WellAwards** book consists of thirty-three different activities where participants can voluntarily participate to earn credit. The accumulation of fifteen credits earns the \$100 cash award. A third-party provider will write and mail the award checks in May 2009. It is anticipated that participation will be about 50 - 70% of our eligible plan members (5,000-7,000). Programs that demonstrate an 85% participation rate show the greatest return on investment.

The MUS Wellness Program conducted a **WellAwards** Pilot Program at Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) last year and this information was presented at the March IUBC meeting. **Results of FVCC WellAwards Pilot Program** (Sept. 4 – Nov. 30, 2007):

- 98 participants (43% of eligible population of 226 insured employees and spouses)
- 100% of participants completed the program evaluation
- 69% or 61 people reported participating in 134 new activities (change in behavior)
- 53% reported improved health
- 93 indicators of improved health as a direct result of the program were reported:
 - 38 reported feeling better
 - 16 lost weight
 - 15 improved cholesterol
 - 10 started exercising regularly
 - 9 lowered blood pressure
 - 5 quit smoking or chewing tobacco
- Program demonstrated a 7:1 ROI (Return on Investment); calculated using potential savings due to improved risk status minus program costs.

The MUS Wellness program will launch **WellAwards** for all plan members during plan year 2008/2009. Online **WellAwards** registration will occur during September 1 - 30, 2008. Participants will be asked to record their activities on the Record Keeper in the **WellAwards** book and use it as a reference when they submit their credits. Online completion or credit submission will occur from April 1 – 30, 2009. During the completion/credit submission process, all participants will be directed to complete a brief online evaluation to document results for the entire population. If we demonstrate changes in behavior or lifestyle risk factors, a return on investment, or actual reductions in medical expenditures, it is anticipated the program will be an ongoing component of our benefits package.

A hallmark feature of any *successful* Wellness program includes senior management support that creates and sustains a cultural shift to make health a "corporate" value. All internal leaders need to inspire employees to choose to live a healthy lifestyle both in and out of work because people want to believe their employer cares about them. Organizations need to create an environment that fosters developing and maintaining healthy behaviors and constructive thinking because a positive work culture is where people thrive. Employees are our biggest asset and an investment in employee health is an investment in the future of the Montana University System. **WellAwards** is being implemented as an incentive program that will enable (engage) people to stay healthy or encourage (invite) those who need to improve their health status. We want people on the health bus, it doesn't matter if they are in the back seat or hanging on to the roof by their finger nails, as long as they get on the bus....thus, **WellAwards**.

OBJECTIVES

This communication plan has been prepared to support the implementation of **WellAwards** on The University of Montana campus. The purpose of this plan is to document the framework, content and key messages needed to insure effective communication occurs for the following audiences.

Audience	Communications will result in the audience understanding that:
Executive Officers, Deans, Chairs Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will appreciate WellAwards was implemented as a strategic component of our self-funded insurance plan to help prevent disease, improve employee morale, and offset rising health care costs. • They will effectively communicate with all subordinate front-line supervisors to insure awareness of the employee benefit and implementation of the online processes.
Front-line Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will post WellAwards marketing posters within their department and advise faculty and staff (and spouses indirectly) that they will receive their WellAwards book at home sometime in August, which includes complete program instructions. • They will insure their eligible and interested faculty or staff employees have access to a computer for the online registration (September 2008) and credit submission/completion (April 2009). • They will refer their employees to Faculty-Staff Wellness if they have questions or problems with online process, or lack computer skills. • They will be aware that WellAwards participants will receive periodic electronic or paper encouragements, tips, or information throughout the year to maintain program enthusiasm.
Insured Faculty, Staff, Spouses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty, staff, and spouses enrolled in the MUS Benefits (medical) Plan effective on or before June 30, 2008 can participate in WellAwards. Employees hired July 1 or later are <u>not</u> eligible to participate this year. • WellAwards participants <u>must</u> register online from September 1 – 30, 2008 (approx. 1 minute) and submit credits and complete a brief program evaluation online (approx. 15 minutes) from April 1 – 30, 2009. • WellAwards participation includes a \$100 cash award by earning a minimum of 15 credits for participating in the health-related activities listed in the book.

KEY MESSAGES:

- One goal of Worksite Wellness is to partner with senior management to create a health-centered culture and inspire leaders to support employees who choose healthy activities.
- The Montana University System Benefits Plan and Wellness Program are implementing **WellAwards**, an evidence-based incentive program, which may contribute to improved employee health, morale, and productivity.
- All campuses within the Montana University System support insured faculty and staff to actively participate in all facets of the **WellAwards** program from September 1, 2008 through April 30, 2009.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS:

The following highlights the available resources for the **WellAwards** implementation strategy on The University of Montana campus for plan year 2008/2009.

WellAwards Books:

- Mailed to eligible employees and spouses to home addresses in August, 2008.
- Describes participation eligibility and the registration/completion processes.

Online Registration/Completion:

- Wellness Website: www.montana.edu/wellness; select "WellAwards"

Computer Usage Options (for online registration and completion):

1. Allow employees to use available department computer.
2. Refer employee to another computer on-campus:
 - Mansfield Library (6866), Reference Desk (main floor, located near entrance);
Fall hours: 7:00am – 2:00am; open to public, no password or login required.
 - School of Business Administration (4282); Gallagher, Room 209;
Fall hours: 7:30am – 8:00pm; open to faculty/staff, no password/login required.
 - IT Computer Labs (5362) (requires NetID and password). Refer to website for hours and information: www.umt.edu/it/learning/computerlabs.htm
 - Fine Arts, Room 210
 - University Center, Room 225
 - Liberal Arts, Rooms 206, 240 and 242
3. Refer employee to Faculty-Staff Wellness office (243-2027 or 243-2025; CHC 108).
4. Refer employee to their local library or other accessible community computer.

Computer Assistance Options (if employee lacks computer-skills):

1. Determine if employee would be amenable to another staff person completing the online enrollment/completion process for him/her and coordinate internally.
2. Refer employee to Faculty-Staff Wellness office (2025 or 2027; CHC 108) for help.

Questions / Problems (with online processes, implementation, award checks, etc.):

- Refer employee to Faculty-Staff Wellness office (2025 or 2027; CHC 108).

CONTACTS:

Angela Priest, Assistant Director, UM Faculty-Staff Wellness
(online registration/completion): 243-2027; CHC 108

Lisa Hofman, Program Coordinator, Montana University System Wellness
(online registration/completion): 243-2025; CHC 108

Jill Young, Director, Montana University System Wellness and UM Faculty-Staff Wellness:
(WellAwards design/implementation): 243-2028; CHC 108

Website: WellAwards Online Registration and Completion/Credit Submission:
www.montana.edu/wellness; select: WellAwards

COMMUNICATION PLAN AT-A-GLANCE

Audience	Purpose	Communication Vehicle	Frequency	Responsibility	Completion Date
Sheila Stearns BOR, Presidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advise program components To advise program components 	<p>Written email</p> <p>Board of Regents meeting</p>	<p>1X</p> <p>1X</p>	<p>Paul Bogumill, Director, Benefits</p> <p>Sheila Stearns, Commissioner</p>	<p>May 23, 2008</p> <p>Sept, 2008</p>
Executive Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advise program components and their role with campus implementation. 	Small group meeting	1X	Betsy Hawkins	July 14, 2008
Deans, Chairs, Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advise program components To advise their role to enable campus implementation and notification to employees regarding program eligibility and online registration/completion. To inform them employees may receive periodic electronic emails to maintain program enthusiasm. 	HR Forum	1X	Jill Young	July 31 or Aug 4, 2008
Front-line Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advise their role to post WellAwards posters, inform employees of available computers for online registration/completion or where to go for help, and allow employees to view program marketing materials during work hours. 	<p>Small group discussions: -Department meetings -1-on-1 with chairs, managers, or supervisors</p>	1X	Deans, Chairs, Directors	August 31, 2008
Insured Faculty, Staff, Spouses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide awareness of WellAwards program and opportunity to receive \$100 cash award. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MUS Wellness newsletter Campus-wide email WellAwards books UM Wellness flyer 	1X	MUS Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May & Aug, '08 August 1, 2008 August 22, 2008 Sept 1, 2008
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help provide awareness of WellAwards, insure employees are allowed to use available campus computers for online registration/completion or be informed of all available campus resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post WellAwards posters Small group discussions: -Department meetings -1-on-1 with employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1X 2X 	Front-line Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aug/Sept, 2008 Sept 2008 and April 2009