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FEATURE

A New Approach to Condition Management

Traditional disease management programs have low utilization, high costs and limited impact. WebMD's disruptive approach to condition management leverages our technological strength, clinical knowledge and engagement expertise. This new approach optimizes participation and ROI, and maximizes employee health and productivity. > [Read Article](#)



BEST PRACTICES Q & A

Focus on Getting Your Population Moving

Despite the clear benefits of improved employee health and healthcare cost savings, many employers find it hard to prompt employees to increase exercise. We offer a range of innovative ideas on how to get your population moving.

> [Read Article](#)

CLIENT CORNER

Award-Winning Wellness Program Drives Improved Outcomes for Carolinas HealthCare System

Carolinas HealthCare System recently was awarded the 2011 eHealth Initiative Award for "Organization of the Year," and shares details of its successful health management program in an upcoming webinar with WebMD.

> [Read Article](#)

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Digital Health Assistant

The Digital Health Assistant (DHA) is an online platform for behavior change that guides individuals with health risks and acute and chronic conditions toward making meaningful health improvements. This highly personalized, consumer-focused approach leads to higher engagement and better outcomes.

> [Read Article](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEBMD WEBINAR

LiveWELL Carolinas! A Case Study In Health Management Success

Tuesday, March 29
2:00 p.m. ET

[Register](#)

CONFERENCES

The Conference Board- Employee Healthcare Conference

March 24-25
San Diego, CA

AHIP Institute

June 15 - 17
San Francisco, CA

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A New Approach to Condition Management

By Rajni Aneja, MD, CPE, Chief Medical Officer, WebMD Health Services, and Scott Heimes, Senior Vice President of Marketing, WebMD Health Services

Individuals coping with acute and chronic health conditions – such as obesity, diabetes, asthma, heart disease, and others – can have a dramatic impact on overall population healthcare costs and productivity. Employers and health plans have traditionally provided support to those with conditions by offering telephonic condition or disease management programs to help with treatment and medication compliance, behavior change and more. But there are a number of challenges with the traditional approach.

Most condition management programs are delivered via telephonic intervention, typically by nurses. Although nurses are highly skilled at helping individuals to learn about and manage their conditions, nurse-delivered DM programs typically reach few people and are very expensive, and therefore show little overall population and financial impact. For most companies, the return on investment (ROI) for these programs is difficult to identify.

Traditional condition management is broken; WebMD takes a different approach.

WebMD takes a disruptive approach to condition management – one that is designed to optimize engagement and ROI. Looking up health information is the third most common online activity among U.S. Internet users, with eight out of 10 Internet users reporting doing so¹, and individuals are increasingly willing to leverage technology for health management. Through our extensive primary research into consumer behavior, WebMD has identified how to fit technology seamlessly into individuals' lives. We use that knowledge to design solutions that are not only simple and enjoyable to use, but more effective and less expensive to deliver.

Leveraging our strong consumer brand and in-house engagement services agency, our solutions also consistently deliver engagement

rates that are 2-3x industry averages – ensuring that our condition and lifestyle management solutions help individuals manage their conditions, improve their health and have a real impact on our clients' bottom lines.

Core to WebMD's strategy is our new online platform for behavior change, the Digital Health Assistant. The Digital Health Assistant takes what WebMD knows works from delivering successful one-on-one telephonic and onsite programs for more than 15 years, and moves that online. The Digital Health Assistant helps consumers follow evidence-based guidelines for care, set long-term goals for their health, choose and commit to short term goals, and effortlessly engage in essential self-monitoring behaviors through integrated wireless home devices.

Obesity management: first implementation of an innovative approach.

The WebMD obesity condition management program is the first comprehensive condition management solution to leverage the new online Digital Health Assistant. This smart, evidence-based, theory-driven

design leverages technology to help individuals become engaged, stay involved, and change their behavior. (*For more information about the Digital Health Assistant and how it applies to obesity management, see our [related article](#).*)

The first delivery of this innovative new condition management experience for obesity is launching in April 2011. The second program, for diabetes, will launch in December and will be closely followed by programs for coronary artery disease (CAD), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), congestive heart failure (CHF), and asthma.



For more information about WebMD's disruptive approach to condition management, see our [archived webinar](#) on "Best Practices for Addressing Obesity in the Workplace."

¹ Pew Internet Project and the California HealthCare Foundation, February 2011.

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BEST PRACTICES Q&A

Focus on Getting Your Population Moving

In recent studies, WebMD looked at how changes in exercise impacted health, and how those health outcomes could affect a company's bottom line. Employees who increased exercise saw a decrease in the presence of several costly health risks, including depressive symptoms, stress, glucose, weight, and blood pressure, and indicated they were more satisfied with their jobs and lives. Individuals who improved their exercise health risk were also more likely to improve other health risks, including smoking, cholesterol, alcohol use, and diet. And employers can see dramatic financial impacts – as much as an \$800 annual difference in projected medical, absenteeism, and presenteeism costs between those who increased exercise and those who decreased it.

But despite clear benefits, many employers find it hard to prompt employees to increase exercise. We talked to Steve Merryman, WebMD Health Services director of analytics, for some best practices on how to get your population moving.

Doesn't it require big changes in the amount a population exercises to see an improvement in health and healthcare costs?

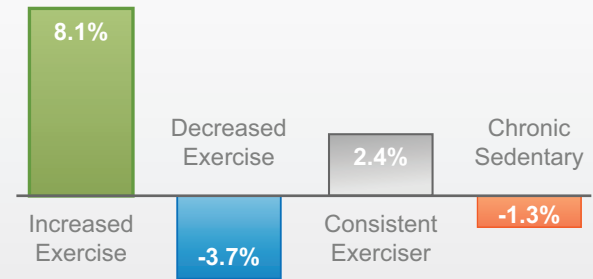
Our Exercise Tipping Point study found that the greatest financial impact for employers is to get those who don't exercise at all to walk as little as five minutes per day – about 30 minutes a week. This can result in a \$268 annual savings per person, so even small changes can have significant results.

One of our clients set up a 15-minute group walking program at the end of each shift, which made the program convenient and social and took advantage of the transition from work to home – without putting stress on either one. Those are key elements: start small and make it easy, convenient, and fun for employees.

What are some effective ways to involve managers in promoting exercise programs for employees?

Buy-in and participation from management at all levels helps build a culture of health that will influence employees. Encourage managers to exhibit supportive behavior such as walking or

Change in Percent at Low Risk



The WebMD Exercise Tipping Point study found that the number of employees categorized as "low risk" increased significantly when employees increased exercise.

exercising at lunch time, so employees are less likely to feel hesitant about doing it themselves. You can also take advantage of friendly competition between managers that can prompt continued support and participation. Measure participation in company-sponsored activities such as WebMD Wellness Challenges (see sidebar on page 4), onsite gyms, or lunch-and-learn sessions and report back to senior managers on what percentage of their employees were active that quarter. Give managers updates that they can report to their groups – this kind of feedback loop reinforces positive behavior.

What are some best practices in communicating to employees about exercise opportunities and benefits?

The more a message seems to speak to an individual and his or her specific situation, the more likely that person is to take action. Targeted messaging is an important part of your overall communication strategy. Think about stages of life – what we might call "health-o-graphics" – and target exercise messages appropriately. Employees who are young, healthy, and social will have different motivators for exercising than employees who are juggling work, family, and community commitments, or employees who are managing health conditions. Provide exercise opportunities that will appeal to different groups and make a personal connection, rather than setting down a corporate mandate.

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What are some of the best ways to use wellness coordinators to encourage exercise?

Dedicated onsite wellness coordinators or employee volunteers can help with many logistics issues such as putting up posters, arranging for activities like lunch-and-learns or yoga classes, and taking participation counts and input from employees. You should also take advantage of their local knowledge. They might be able to research enjoyable walks around the local facility and provide directions, or set up contacts with local sports organizations such as softball leagues or biking groups. They can also help model (and promote) behavior, such as taking the stairs back to the office after company meetings, parking at the far end of the lot, or printing documents to a printer across the office or on another floor. These are small, non-institutional actions that can make a difference with minimal cost to the employer.

SOCIALIZE HEALTHY BEHAVIOR

WebMD Wellness Challenges use friendly competition as a powerful behavior-change motivator. WebMD Hit Your Stride is



a fun, team-based walking challenge that lets employees compete with themselves and co-workers on numbers of steps walked.

WebMD Ready! Set! Move! Is an exercise challenge where teams compete for most minutes exercised or most "ActivePoints" measured by accelerometer.

For more information on exercise and employee health, see our [archived webinar](#).

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Award-Winning Wellness Program Drives Improved Outcomes for Carolinas HealthCare System

LiveWELL Carolinas!, the employee health and wellness program at Carolinas HealthCare System (CHS), offers more than 25,000



CHS employees the opportunity to benefit from physical exercise, counseling on smoking cessation and stress management, and nutrition education and programming. In February, the program was awarded the 2011 eHealth Initiative Award for "Organization of the Year," recognizing *LiveWell* Carolinas! as a champion of health information technology and highlighting CHS's commitment to improving the quality, safety, and efficiency of healthcare through information technology.

To help CHS employees improve their health risks, change unhealthy behaviors, and reduce healthcare costs, *LiveWELL* Carolinas! worked collaboratively with WebMD Health Services. The jointly administered health management program combines personalized online resources and telephonic lifestyle coaching from certified WebMD health coaches. According to CHS, the counseling is effective in addressing the most prevalent population health risks, including weight (60 percent), stress (59 percent), and poor diet (58 percent).

More details of CHS's award-winning health management program will be shared in an upcoming webinar on March 29: "[LiveWELL Carolinas!: A Case Study in Health Management Success](#)," presented by Mary Jane Rink, assistant vice president, *LiveWELL* Carolinas!, and Steve Merryman, director of analytics for WebMD Health Services.

The award highlights CHS's wellness leadership at a time when hospitals are increasingly recognized for their ability to serve as role models for wellness within their communities. This past January, the American Hospital Association put out "[A Call to Action: Creating a Culture of Health](#)," with recommendations for how hospitals can create a culture of employee health and wellness.

CHS' s experience shows that employees who are emotionally and physically healthy consistently demonstrate their commitment, caring, integrity, and teamwork when serving patients, their families, and other members of the community. "There is no question that our patients are getting better care as a result of the program," said Rink. "A caregiver who is fit, happy, and healthy has an increased capacity to heal and inspire other people. We see evidence of this every day, and we get a return on our investment every day."

For more details on Carolinas HealthCare System's approach and success, see the [CHS press release](#) on the eHI award or [register for the upcoming webinar](#).

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Digital Health Assistant

WebMD's new Digital Health Assistant (DHA) is an online platform for behavior change that supports and complements health coaching by guiding individuals with health risks and acute and chronic conditions toward making meaningful health improvements. It's a key component of WebMD's strategic approach toward condition management that is designed to optimize participation and return on investment (ROI).



After helping consumers set both short- and long-term goals, the DHA provides personalized, qualitative feedback on progress through user-tested messaging that echos the supportive tone of WebMD's telephonic health experts. When users are not engaging, not progressing or reporting values outside of appropriate ranges, our integrated program protocols push outbound telephonic calls from care professionals to provide one-on-one support to those who need it most.

The DHA also performs the necessary evidenced-based education about managing a condition or improving a health risk, providing essential information in an easy-to-digest manner and allowing users to earn rewards for their engagement. The Digital Health Assistant takes a whole-person approach, supporting multiple conditions and risks in an integrated and prioritized way, just as a healthcare professional would.

Another way the DHA emulates a live care professional or coach is in matching messaging to participant mind-set. Healthcare professionals are expert at hearing what is not being said, but online applications typically cannot. The DHA, like a caring coach, asks the participant how they are feeling, and matches messaging and recommendations appropriately – driving user satisfaction and high ongoing engagement.

The WebMD obesity condition management program is the first comprehensive condition management solution to leverage the new online Digital Health Assistant. In this program, participants:

- > Interact online to set appropriate long-term goals, select and commit to short-term activities, and learn about their condition in a meaningful and contextual way – all while earning rewards designed using game theory to drive engagement
- > Receive a wireless, auto-uploading digital scale and accelerometer to track behaviors and biometrics
- > Receive regular messaging that is personalized and qualitative to further drive ongoing engagement
- > Receive regular calls from a weight management specialist and escalated calls when determined by protocols

When participants speak with a weight management specialist by phone – one of WebMD's registered dietitians certified in adult weight management or exercise/fitness professionals with extensive weight management counseling experience – conversations are highly focused. This is due to the extensive data available to coaches: participant-selected goals and activities, adherence to weekly plan and body weight and physical activity levels as measured by devices. Coaches can therefore spend the essential and more expensive one-on-one time on the phone discussing specific participant needs, such as help with barriers or comprehension with care guidelines. Through integrated system access to the DHA, WebMD coaches can easily guide participants to meaningful online resources and information.

This highly personalized, consumer-focused approach delivers better outcomes, higher engagement and – capitalizing on the scalable value of technology – to maximum return on investment.

For more information about WebMD's new Digital Health Assistant, contact your account manager or see our [feature article](#) on how it fits into WebMD's strategic approach toward condition management.