



#### Client:

Medtronic, Inc.,  
Minneapolis, MN.

#### Challenge:

Help employees identify their health risks and find the right resources from a rich set of programs to address those risks.

#### Solution:

Put health coaches at the center of an integrated wellness plan to improve health status and reduce or eliminate risks.

#### Results:

- > Health Risk Questionnaire completion jumped from 33% to 88%
- > Over 10,000 have engaged with a health coach
- > 58% of those have improved or eliminated at least one health risk

## Health Coaches Help Medtronic Employees Navigate A Sea Of Wellness Programs

### A Case Study

Medtronic's commitment to improving global health begins with its employees. For more than 30 years, Medtronic has offered extensive health and wellness programs to its 23,000 employees. In 2006, the company added health coaching and a personalized Total Health web portal that provides a full range of integrated online health programs. The challenge for employees was to find the right health resources when they needed them.

"We had a lot of resources, but there wasn't a lot of structure," said Gen Barron, Medtronic's senior manager for U.S. health and wellness and work life, who manages the Total Health program with a small internal team. "We have used health risk questionnaires for years. You would find out that you had some health risks and be prompted to make some changes, but it was up to you to navigate through all the resources. People were swimming in this big ocean without a lot of direction.

#### HEALTH COACHES ARE AT THE CENTER OF AN INTEGRATED WELLNESS PROGRAM

Health coaches serve as personal navigators for Medtronic's Total Health program. They are go-to sources for guidance and champions of healthy behavior, directing individuals with health risks through the process of positive change. "We positioned the health coach at the center," said Barron.

Results of annual health risk questionnaires (HRQs) identify individuals for outreach. Employees with one or more health risks receive a call from a health coach, but employees can also call a coach on their own to help them set appropriate wellness goals, refer them to sponsored health programs, or recommend appropriate health resources.

*"Our primary goal is to keep the healthy population healthy and to improve the health of all employees and family members."*

*– Gen Barron Medtronic Manager of Employee Wellness*

Through a series of follow-up calls, coaches help individuals set and achieve personal action plans to improve health status and reduce or eliminate risks. Coaches can refer participants to relevant resources, including working with them to track progress using online lifestyle improvement programs (LIPs).

"Our health coaches know about all of our programs," Barron explained. "If an employee wants to quit smoking, the health coach knows what programs are available at that employee's location, what his health plan offers, and what support programs are available online."

Approximately \$1 million – 40% of Medtronic's \$2.2 million Total Health budget – supports health coaching. Another 50% pays for wellness screenings and flu vaccinations, and the remainder goes to the web portal, administration of the HRQ, and the incentive program.

"Our primary goal is to keep the healthy population healthy and to improve the health of all employees and family members," Barron said. "Our guiding principles are focused on investing in health rather

## Medtronic's step-by-step incentives plan

### Awareness.

Use prize drawings to encourage employees to take the HRQ annually:

- > \$500 travel vouchers
- > Fruit-of-the-month club memberships
- > Total Health "days off"

### Action.

Accumulate 100 points and earn a \$50 deposit into a health reimbursement account. Earn up to \$150 each year by:

- > Completing a Lifestyle Improvement Program
- > Participating in the annual Wellness Screening
- > Getting a flu vaccination

### Improvement.

Premium differential plus Healthy Incentives points help to:

- > Maintain interest and motivation
- > Encourage health risk management
- > Engage employees in their health

than the cost of treatment, educating participants around consumerism and using tools and resources to make wise health care decisions, and improving health through behavior change. We know that by doing this successfully, we will have healthier and more productive employees."

### COMMUNICATION AND INCENTIVES ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Barron and her team have a detailed annual communication plan that addresses all employees and includes secure messages to those with specific risks. Last year, the group sent more than 40 planned communications, including e-mails as well as print newsletters sent to the home. Success stories are a key element in communicating the value of health coaching.

Medtronic also underscores the importance of health and wellness by providing incentives for participation. Employees who enroll in Total Health and complete the HRQ pay \$50 less per month in health premiums than employees who choose not to complete the HRQ. Those who take action to maintain or improve their health also earn points toward an annual award in a Healthy Incentives account, to be applied toward deductibles, copays, or other health expenses. An employee whose spouse completes an HRQ can also earn points toward the award.

### BENCHMARKS PROVIDE SPECIFIC PROGRAM GOALS – AND RESULTS

Medtronic compared its employees' HRQ data to national health benchmarks from similar companies to establish program goals. Employees were stratified into low, medium, and high risk categories. The goal was to have 80% of employees in the low-risk category, 16% medium, and 4% high. When the Total Health program started in 2006, 59% of Medtronic employees were low risk, with 36% medium and 5% high. Today, 80% of employees are in the low-risk category (a 20% increase), 17% medium and only 3% in the high-risk category (a 2% decrease).

More than 10,000 Medtronic employees have worked with a health coach to date, with outcomes that include:

- > 58% eliminated or reduced at least one health risk
- > 15% reduction in smoking, with 95% non-smokers
- > 72% reduction in participants at risk for cholesterol from 2007-2009
- > 50% reduction in participants at risk for glucose from 2007-2009
- > 12,700 pounds lost from Shape Up the Nation participants in 2009
- > 20% increase in preventive screenings
- > 30% decrease in medical and prescription claims from population involved in health coaching
- > Preventive visits among individuals with diabetes increased by 72%, while emergency room visits due to diabetic conditions decreased by 54%

### REGULAR ENHANCEMENTS SUPPORT ONGOING SUCCESS

Even as Medtronic reaches its wellness goals, Barron and her group stay busy enhancing and updating the program. Medtronic will add claims data to online personal health records (PHRs) this year, which will provide more detailed information for employees and health coaches to use to understand and manage their health.

The incentive program has been upgraded to allow employees to earn higher awards and to claim their awards monthly rather than quarterly. A new incentive for spouses who completed the HRQ resulted in an 80% increase in spouse participation in 2009. This year, Medtronic is considering implementing a premium differential in 2011 for spouses to increase their participation even more.