

Working Well

In St. Cloud, KDV's worksite wellness program takes off thanks to the Statewide Health Improvement Program.

With an annual Biggest Loser-style weight loss competition and occasional “Lunch and Learn” sessions with health and nutrition experts, St. Cloud-based KDV had already set the stage for a culture of wellness among its employees. The financial and technology services and consulting company even had a 10-person wellness committee devoted to the cause. However, wellness events were sporadic, and the committee’s primary purpose was to research an HSA



option for employees. But last year when committee members attended a Minnesota Department of Health Statewide Health Improvement Program meeting, they learned the program could help their company take its efforts to another level.

The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) leverages policy, systems and environmental changes to help Minnesotans decrease smoking and tobacco use, eat healthier and move more to fight unhealthy weight. In January, SHIP awarded KDV a grant to help develop a menu of wellness educa-

tion programs and activities.

KDV has invested much of the funding in contracted services with Rejuv Medical, a fitness and physical wellness company in nearby Waite Park. Rejuv is providing KDV employees with twice-monthly “Lunch and Learn” sessions taught by industry professionals. Designed to offer tips to achieve better health, each session focuses on a different topic, from nutrition and reading food labels, to the nuts and bolts of strength training, cardio and stretching, to dealing with stress. Employees who attend also enjoy a free healthy lunch.

Andrea Kringstad, controller, believes the sessions have helped employees become more knowledgeable about making healthy choices.

“Before, we would hear from employees that time was

the biggest obstacle to maintaining a healthy lifestyle,” she says. “But I think through the education process they’ve been receptive to the fact that small changes can make a big difference.”

In that spirit, employees are also invited to attend weekly group workouts hosted by Rejuv. Some are gearing up for KDV’s first-ever company 5K. To date, 20 people have signed up to participate in the race next month.

To keep employees healthy in the long run, the company is also giving each employee an Easy Fit monitor. The wearable device tracks movement and calories burned, offering each wearer a snapshot of their daily exercise.

Though the company has yet to measure return on investment when it comes to health-oriented programs, Kringstad says SHIP funds have allowed KDV to jump on the fast track to a culture of wellness.

“People are not going for candy in the vending machines,” Kringstad says. “They are bringing healthy snacks from home and trying to avoid soda, opting for alternatives like water.

People are also talking about being more physically active.

Just to hear about people being physically active outside of work is great.” ●

