



Paramount plan boosts workers', company's health

Paramount Coffee Co. is introducing an employee wellness plan that is designed to improve both workers' health and enhance the positive working environment at the employee owned company.

"It's truly an investment in our employees," explains **Deana Florian**, Paramount sales assistant, who assisted in the program's development. "People who feel good about their workplace and feel that their employer cares about them feel better about themselves."

The program began with biometric screenings of workers on June 10. More than 80 percent of workers voluntarily participated in the health tests, which provide participants with such information as their blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose levels.

"That's a huge number," says **Karen Surdenik**, employee relations specialist at Lansing-based Sparrow Health System, which is administering Paramount's plan. "They are just going to have phenomenal participation for a first-year plan.

"Paramount is doing this in a methodical, well-thought-out way," Surdenik notes. "They really want to make a difference, for all the right reasons. A lot of that, I believe, comes from who Paramount is. They're a successful company and they'll have success at this, as well."

The aim of the program is to encourage employees to monitor their health and maintain healthy habits, with the ultimate goal of warding off serious — and costly — medical issues.

The company stands to benefit from a healthier work force by saving on insurance costs and having lower absenteeism and higher worker productivity. Surdenik says wellness programs provide a 3-to-1 return on a company's investment in terms of lowering overall health expenses.

Paramount leaders, though, are motivated by more than mere dollars and cents. It's part of a broader effort to enhance the employee workplace and corporate culture.

After the health screenings, which will also include a brief consultation with a nurse, employees will receive a confidential, personalized health report. The company itself will not receive reports on individuals. Rather, it will receive aggregate statistics that will paint the overall health picture of Paramount's workforce. The information will help the company determine what types of programs to sponsor, such as weight-loss or smoking-cessation classes, Florian says.

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