

WELLNESS CASE STUDY

Reid Psychological Systems, Illinois

It was the rising cost of health insurance that prompted Steve Coffman to start a wellness program six years ago at his Chicago firm, Reid Psychological Systems (RPS), a publisher of psychological employment tests.

At the time, the company's premiums were "exorbitant - well above the national average," recalls Coffman, the company's president. Within two years of the start of the program, though, premiums had dropped, and they now are about 45 percent below the national average.

Absenteeism among RPS's 136 employees has declined as well over the past four years. The savings are particularly important to Coffman because he pays 100 percent of the premiums for all eligible employees.

RPS's wellness initiatives include a no-smoking policy and an annual in-house health fair at which employees can get a free checkup. Also, employees get an extra paid day off if they have had no claims within 12 months. Tying in the notion of wellness of the community at large, RPS gives employees paid time off when they do volunteer work in the community.

Employees also can take advantage of monthly seminars on subjects such as nutrition, stress relief, and self-defense. "We decided that through education, employees become better health consumers and that that would benefit the company," says Coffman.