

# Johnson & Johnson LIVE FOR LIFE® Program: Now and Then

*Fikry Isaac, MD, P. Flynn, MS*

Johnson & Johnson is a leader in the health care industry. Sales in 1999 totaled \$27.5 billion. The company consists of 190 operating companies in 51 countries with 99,000 employees worldwide and is headquartered in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Although Johnson & Johnson is perhaps best known for its Band-Aid adhesive bandages and Tylenol, it has an extensive product line in the pharmaceutical, professional, and consumer markets. As an extension of its leadership position in industry and the community, Johnson & Johnson is also a leader in protecting

---

*Fikry Isaac, MD, and P. Flynn, MS, are with Johnson & Johnson in New Brunswick, New Jersey.*

Send reprint requests to Dr. Fikry Isaac, Johnson & Johnson, 501 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.

*This manuscript was an invited contribution.*

*Am J Health Promot 2001;15(5):365-367.  
Copyright © 2001 by American Journal of Health Promotion, Inc.  
0890-1171/01/\$5.00 + 0*

and enhancing the health and safety of its employees. Because of this philosophy, management is open to the idea of positive lifestyle modification and recognizes the real value of this concept in the workplace.

In the new millennium, health and fitness is a multibillion dollar industry, showcasing the latest trends for healthy lifestyle behaviors. For some, these initiatives began over 20 years ago. At that time, Johnson & Johnson company group chairman Jim Burke introduced to employees the concept of encouraging positive lifestyle change. He believed that unhealthy behaviors—smoking, overeating, alcohol abuse, emotional stress, hypertension, and unsafe driving—were responsible for a large share of the company's health care costs in the United States, which increased from \$80.3 billion in 1972 to \$162 billion<sup>1</sup> in 1978 (J. Burke, personal communication, 1978). As a result of his initiative, Johnson & Johnson piloted its LIVE FOR LIFE® project in 1978 to improve the health and well-being of its employees. Burke set two major goals for this cutting-edge program:

- Encourage Johnson & Johnson employees to become the healthiest in the world through education and easy access to behavior modification programs and opportunities.
- Implement on-site programs and services to bring down the cost of health care for the corporation.

The pilot program at Johnson & Johnson headquarters achieved high participation rates with over 50% of company employees voluntarily participating in the program.

The mission of LIVE FOR LIFE® was to encourage employees to accept responsibility for their own health and well-being by providing them and their families with resources and opportunities that would result in healthier lifestyles. Johnson & Johnson implemented programs that focused on nutrition education, weight management, exercise, smoking cessation, stress management, and blood pressure control. As program participation grew, data supporting the positive impact of these programs was published internally, as well as externally through peer-reviewed journals. Johnson & Johnson then began to shift resources and dollars to programs that targeted the greatest needs of their employees.

From 1979 to 1983, the Johnson & Johnson companies that had implemented a LIVE FOR LIFE® program experienced hospitalization costs at one-third the rate of companies without a LIVE FOR LIFE® program,<sup>2</sup> with absenteeism decreasing by 18%.<sup>3</sup> LIVE FOR LIFE® demonstrated improvements in weight control, blood pressure control, cholesterol, and smoking cessation, contributing to an estimated 3% to 5% reduction in health care costs. Studies documented that reducing medical and absenteeism costs alone yielded a 1.7:1 return on investment.<sup>4,5</sup> Other positive findings included increased employee morale, job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervision, and organizational commitment.<sup>4,5</sup>

Each Johnson & Johnson company received individualized programs and services based on that company's management support, dollars allocated, and availability/expertise of on-site health and wellness professionals. LIVE FOR LIFE® was implemented through a strong marketing process designed to maximize employee participation in a healthier lifestyle. The colorful LIVE FOR LIFE® rainbow logo was recognized by employees as a comprehensive health information and education service. Johnson & Johnson wanted employees to think positively about health each time they saw the logo or participated in a program. By 1986 the LIVE FOR LIFE® program had expanded to 22 Johnson & Johnson locations serving over 16,000 employees, and in 1992 it was the first recipient of the C. Everett Koop Award.

#### **PARTNERS FOR INTEGRATED SUCCESS**

In 1986, the success of the LIVE FOR LIFE® program provided Johnson & Johnson with an opportunity for continuous improvement. The launch of a "partnership" within LIVE FOR LIFE® to encompass benefits, employee assistance, occupational health, safety, and wellness was introduced to employees. Until now, the organizational

structure provided little opportunity for sharing professional expertise and program outcomes.

Although the goals of the LIVE FOR LIFE® program had been implemented, it was important for internal partners within the program to align strategically and provide employees and families of Johnson & Johnson a seamless approach to service. By 1995, Johnson & Johnson developed their strategic position to integrate occupational medicine, fitness, wellness, employee assistance, and disability management into one comprehensive offering called Health and Wellness. This approach provided health programs and services to employees across all dimensions. Health and Wellness professionals worked as teams in servicing their employees. Administration systems were set up to ease the cross-utilization of resources, breaking down previous "silos of service."

#### **PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS**

Employees who participate in a health profile receive a \$500 reduction in their health insurance premium. This was accomplished through a health appraisal process redesigned to create a unique link to the employee's health benefits program. As individual health risks were identified, intervention programs were offered to the employee at home or at work without any punitive consequence. With a menu of programs available to employees, Health and Wellness charged each company a set fee for services per employee. Site support of the Health and Wellness program came through the leadership of each operating company's vice president of human resources.

Johnson & Johnson continued to extend its programs. It acquired two companies that broadened its scope of services to address primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. By aligning this growth with two other business units, Johnson & Johnson formed J&J Health Care Systems, Inc. J&J Health Care Systems coordinates the expertise of Johnson & Johnson across the continuum of care, including wellness, prevention, early detection, cost-effective treatment, ongoing maintenance, and health enhancement.

#### **LINKS TO THE FUTURE**

##### **Health and Wellness Commitment**

Health and Wellness is committed to continue to provide programs and services that are consistent with the Johnson & Johnson credo. The credo advocates integrity, a balance between work and family, and a commitment to employee's health and safety while maintaining the highest quality products and services to our customers. By lowering health care costs, Johnson & Johnson meets the credo requirement to reduce costs in order to maintain reasonable product prices and services for our customers. The credo specifies that we respect the dignity and recognize the merit of our employees. LIVE FOR LIFE® allows Johnson & Johnson to demonstrate the high value it places on the well-being of its employees. J&J Health Care Systems fulfills the credo commitment to the communities in which we live and work by marketing our programs and services to

other employers in the community. Our final credo responsibility is to our stockholders to make a sound profit is directly linked to the well-being, innovation, productivity, and organizational commitment of our employees.

### **Results of Our Efforts Are Impressive**

Ninety percent of all domestic employees participate in the Health and Wellness benefits linkage program. Ninety-five percent of all employees rate these programs and services as very good or excellent. These figures are obtained through management surveys, "point of service" evaluations, and credo survey studies. All new employees are provided with a self-care manual to assist them and their family in maintaining good health. Currently, 40,000 Johnson & Johnson employees have access (on-site or remotely) to the integrated teams of occupational health, wellness, disability management, and employee assistance services. In 1998, J&J Health and Wellness received the Corporate Health Achievement Award of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine because it was considered to be a model of excellence.

### **IN SUMMARY**

Health and Wellness continues the vision to optimize the health, well-being, and productivity of Johnson &

Johnson employees. The mission is simple: we will deliver leading-edge, best-value health and wellness services that achieve excellence in customer satisfaction and promote prevention, education, and self-responsibility.

Investing in our employee's health and well-being is justified by our conviction that one of Johnson & Johnson's most important competitive advantages is the quality of our people and their organizational capability. Given enough time and effort, others can mimic or duplicate our products or design around our patents. We believe it is far more difficult to duplicate our organizational strength and the potential of our healthy employees.

### **References**

1. Health Insurance Association of America and American Council of Life Insurance. *Wellness at the Worksites*. Washington, DC: Health Insurance Association of America; 1993.
2. Bly JL, Jones RC, Richardson JE. Impact of worksite health promotion on health care costs and utilization: evaluation of Johnson & Johnson's Live for Life program. *JAMA*. 1986;256:3235-3240.
3. Jones RC, Bly JL, Richardson JE. A study of a worksite health promotion program and absenteeism. *J Occup Med*. 1990;32:95-99.
4. Goetzel R, Knight K. Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems. Internal data analysis; 1990.
5. Breslaw L, Fielding J, Herrmann A, Wilbur C. Worksite health promotion: its evolution and the Johnson & Johnson experience. *Prev Med*. 1990;19:13-21.