

A case study: Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

PROBLEM: A potential host for workplace illness & injury

Hospitals are a destination for care—and at the same time, a potential host for workplace illness and injury. The leadership at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) wanted to find an approach to slow rising employee health care expenses which were accounting for almost 10-percent of their annual budget.

SOLUTION: Initiation of the LiveWell/Work Well initiative

In 2009, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) launched its Live Well/Work Well (LWWW) initiative to achieve its vision of the healthiest possible workforce. Upon initiating Live Well/Work Well, DHMC leadership recognized that for the program to stick and sustain, it needed to be grounded in a mission and vision that tied back to the organization. With that direction, leadership developed the following Live Well/Work Well Mission and Vision statements:

- *Vision: Achieve the healthiest workforce possible.*
- *Mission: Create an engaging culture to advance workforce health, safety, and well-being through research, education, clinical practice, and community partnership.*

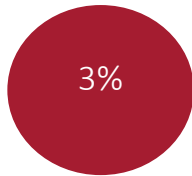
These statements represent an intentional approach to improving workforce safety, health, and well-being. The following outlines characteristics of an effective employee safety and well-being program, and examples from DHMC's LWWW initiative.

CHARACTERISTIC	Example 1	Example 2
LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT	Launched LiveWell/WorkWell initiative with mission of creating an engaging culture to advance workforce, health, safety, and well-being	Leaders ensured that staff were given time to engage with health safety, and well-being efforts
PARTICIPATION	Created a new integrated, problem solving committee called Partners in Health, Environment, Wellness, and Safety (PHEWS) which combined subject matter experts with front line staff from those work units with the highest occupational health risk and/or rate of injury	Housekeeping staff developed a series of competitive, physically-active, and team-based games that trained personnel how to perform their job correctly and safely
POLICIES, PROGRAMS & PRACTICES	Conducted daily safety huddles with clinical staff to address both employee and patient safety and health after an injury	Developed a new nutrition policy, that included reducing the price of healthy food choices to encourage replacing unhealthy food choices (trans fats, sugar-sweetened beverages, fried foods) with healthier options that are also often locally-sourced

COMPREHENSIVE & COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES	Provided training at all levels of leadership to promote management behaviors demonstrated to improve working conditions, employee resilience and well-being (appreciation, transparency, career support, psychological safety, and participative management)	Combined the existing, separate safety, wellness, and environmental sustainability committees in a new group to plan activities
ADHERENCE	Augmented environmental and organizational supports including a rigorous health and safety program, exceeding standard regulatory requirements and a comprehensive benefits package	In response to a combination of events including an active shooter and increasing incidents of patient/visitor violence on health care workers, the institution conducted focus groups, solicited ideas and included front line workers in developing new policies and procedures to address violence in the work place
DATA DRIVEN CHANGE	Utilized regulatory data like OSHA recordable injury rates and internal measures like job engagement (via a survey), to track progress and identify both successes and opportunities	Leveraged data that highlighted departments with above-average health or safety issues, launched a 9-month training program to equip front-line leaders in these departments with skills for creating a supportive culture of health and safety, monitored and evaluated the program, and incorporated lessons learned

RESULTS: DHMC's multi-pronged approach yields significant results

By bringing together well-being and safety, DHMC has reaped the benefits. They've seen reduced FMLA and workers' compensation claims, improved productivity and lower health care costs.



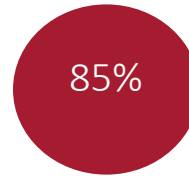
Reduced healthcare costs by three percent – compared to the national increase of four percent



Engaged employees reduced personal health risks



Departments that reported fewer at-risk injures following implementation of department-level safety objectives



Employees felt that DHMC supported their safety and health



Next steps: how to create a culture of well-being & safety

If you're ready to bring well-being and safety together, consider implementation any of the tactics below and the key learnings DHMC observed along the way.

1. *Harnessing Collaboration — Moving Beyond the Meeting Room and Building Cohesive Teams in a Complex Organization*
Key learning: By moving beyond the meeting room, leaders were able to build connections and cohesion with staff on the front lines—where the real action needs to happen
2. *Leveraging the Power of Integrated Goals*
Key Learning: A clear health and safety goal that ties to key organizational goals enables the initiative to resonate with staff and drive performance in multiple areas—not just health and safety. And by leveraging both incentives and resources to stay engaged, results can happen.
3. *Utilize SMART Objectives*
Key learning: Set SMART goals that enable teams to focus on clear objectives that align back to the larger vision and initiative
4. *Monitor, Evaluate, Evolve, Improve*
Key Learning: Regular monitoring and evaluation of metrics and measures enables leaders and staff to see both successes and opportunities. This is the key ingredient that ties together the goals, teams, and collaborative interactions within a mindset of continuous-improvement

SUMMARY: Trying it all together

Hospitals and healthcare organizations see every day how challenging the journey of creating health and well-being really is. Leading organizations like Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center also recognize that starting with its own workforce can be a launching pad for community and population health—as well as bottom line business benefits. DHMC's Live Well / Work Well initiative stands as a demonstration of how deep leadership support, a structural foundation, and intentional tactics can lead to engagement and results towards employee health and safety. By applying the best practices and key learnings outlined in this case study, organizations across industries can advance their own journey towards a healthier, safer workforce—and the many benefits that brings.