



YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids

# HEALTH

## YMCA Takes Wellness Plans In Its Stride

Onsite Biometric Screenings And Analysis Provide A Specific Approach | BY JAKE HIMMELSPACH

The YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids “went back to the drawing board” to reconstruct its corporate health and wellness plan to incorporate programs that were in stride with the changing health benefits industry.

“We’re actually offering the employer the opportunity to do onsite education,” said Dayna Neff, association membership executive with the David D. Hunting YMCA in downtown Grand Rapids. “We can help the employer evaluate and kind of sift through the data, and we can coach them through the process of developing a system within their organization.”

Neff said the organization can also work in partnership with a company’s health care provider to provide programs and health education opportunities, stating that one feature is offering onsite biometric screenings.

“Even if they’re a company with three shifts, we can go in there and service them and provide the opportunity for their employees to have cholesterol screenings or to have glucose screenings,” said Neff.

The YMCA also has a new unit that Neff said is used to determine body fat and lean body mass from a person’s scale weight. Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis, or BIA for short, is capable of breaking down the body by “quadrants” for a more



COURTESY YMCA OF GREATER GRAND RAPIDS  
Neff

specific analysis.

The YMCA partners with a corporation and develops a “coaching plan.” Neff said part of that might include providing an employee health assessment and then offering wellness education classes and programs that cater to specific problems found within that corporation.

“From the HRA (health risk assessment), we can determine if you’ve got 10 percent of your population at risk for Type 2 Diabetes. That’s a pretty good indica-

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tor that we need to bring some diabetic education classes to that organization,” said Neff.

“Our plan can be based on that, so if they ... have a segment of their population that has physical limitations ... we can go in and offer them alternative ideas on how to get those people engaged. Our health and wellness team has the certification, has the knowledge, has the education that we can create those beginner plans for them and get them participating.”

While some wellness programs may neglect employees who are already relatively healthy, Neff said the YMCA also has programs that will challenge employees at a “graduate level.”

“If you have someone that’s a marathon runner in your population, we can work with them, as well,” said Neff. “As you do those initial assessments, you have to be aware of that at-risk or high-risk population ... but you have to also be cognizant of the people who are relatively healthy. Because the objective is to keep the healthy healthy — and those will help to manage the cost, as well.”

The YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids program is setting the tone on a national level.

“We’re really blazing a new path for the YMCA,” said Neff. “We’re involved in a consortium of YMCAs that provide corporate health and wellness in their region or in their communities.”

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