



## **King County Health Reform Initiative**

### **Accomplishments 2005-2008**

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In just three years since its formation by Executive Ron Sims, the King County Health Reform Initiative has prompted employees to work more closely with doctors, co-workers and families to engage in measurable improvements in their health and well-being.

#### **Unprecedented engagement**

- More than 91 percent of eligible King County employees, their spouses or domestic partners take the wellness assessment every year (2006-2008), far above the 60 percent rate typical for such programs.
- More than 90 percent of those taking the assessment enroll in individual action plans, outpacing the typical rate of 50-60 percent.
- Between 2006 and 2008, county employees reported reducing their risks in 12 out of 14 categories including eating a healthy diet, quitting tobacco, managing stress, lowering cholesterol, blood pressure and weight. A remarkable improvement given that employees have aged three years during the evaluation period. Research shows that improvements in health often lead to increased productivity and decreased health care costs.

#### **Programs support healthy choices**

##### Healthy Workplace Funding Initiative

Using a \$25 per employee credit, 84 percent of county employee workgroups self-organized to purchase yoga instruction, fitness training, stress-buster seminars, exercise videos, nutritional information and more -- a 39-point increase over 2006.

##### Weight Watchers at Work<sup>®</sup>

Since the program began in 2006, more than 8,800 pounds have been shed by participants who drop an average of 8 pounds per 13-week session. According to several prominent studies, a weight loss of five to 10 percent can measurably improve health outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

##### Gym Discounts

Twenty-three fitness organizations today offer an average 20 percent discount at more than 120 locations throughout the Puget Sound region.

##### Live Well Challenge

For two years running, an average of 1,000 participants on scores of teams competed for fun and prizes in the annual Live Well Challenge. Over 75 percent of participants say they improve nutrition and physical activity behaviors as a result of their participation.

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### Flu Shots

Last year 3,300 employees -- 33 percent of our targeted workforce -- turned out at worksites across King County to receive no-charge flu shots (a 3% increase over 2006).

### Healthy Vending Machine program

Partnerships with vendors now stock 60% of county building vending machines with healthy snack options. Sales of healthy choices are on the rise.

### Public Health Week

1,300 employees from every department and office took 11.4 million steps -- the same distance as walking from Seattle to La Paz, Bolivia.

### Choose Generics

Since 2005 our "Choose Generics" campaign for prescription drugs has reflected a 10-point increase (from 54% to 64%) in the rate of beneficiaries choosing the lower cost -- but equally effective -- generic prescriptions, saving millions annually.

### Honors and awards

The King County Health Reform Initiative is being recognized nationally for its innovative approach and positive affect on employee health including:

- **NCQA Health Quality Award.** The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) tapped Executive Sims with its 2008 Health Quality Award for his work founding the Puget Sound Health Alliance and pioneering the county's employee wellness initiative. Sims joined Senator Ted Kennedy and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger for this national recognition.
- **American Heart Association "Start!" fit-friendly employer.** Two years in a row the county has received the platinum-level designation as a fit-friendly work environment "for employers who champion the health of their employees and work to create a culture of physical activity."
- **Best Place to Work.** King County government has been named one of the region's "Best Places to Work" by *Seattle Business Monthly* due in part to the Healthy Incentives<sup>SM</sup> program.
- **NACo Achievement Award** for innovation and promotion of effective, responsible county government.
- **Governing Magazine Public Official of the Year.** Executive Sims' leadership and personal involvement in health (including a 40-pound weight drop) won this 2006 accolade "for transforming King County into a national leader in promoting healthy lifestyles for public employees."
- **Health Matters Newsletter.** The popular monthly newsletter captured a 2007 Inspire Award from the League of American Communications professionals. "One of the best two-color publications reviewed..."