

NEBRASKA MEDICINE EXCEEDS HSA ENROLLMENT GOAL AND DRIVES CONSUMER MINDSET WITH GUIDESPARK COMMUNICATE CLOUD



Industry
Healthcare

HQ Location
Omaha, NE

Employees
8,000

“When we moved over to full-replacement HDHPs, it became important for employees to adopt a consumer mindset. Employees need information to make decisions, and it’s up to us to provide it. We had to make sure our information was easy to engage with, whether someone was a millennial or boomer, male or female, a physician or a janitor.”

Laurie Willburn
Director of Total Rewards and HR Operations



100% employees reached by campaign

80% enrollment in HSA, significantly exceeding goal

\$2200 Average HSA contribution, exceeding goal



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Changing Expectations for Changing Times

Headquartered in Omaha, NE, Nebraska Medicine is a regional health system consisting of two hospitals, 1,000 physicians, and 40 specialty and primary care clinics. They've been recognized as one of the top ten academic health systems in the US and have been named to Becker's list of 100 Great Hospitals in America for three consecutive years. In 2017, they set out to transition their 8,000-person workforce towards consumer-driven healthcare plans to reduce costs. And they needed to ensure employees made the right care choices given their health status and life stage.

Nebraska Medicine's Director of Total Rewards and HR Operations, Laurie Willburn, knew that effective communication was essential to this initiative. "We were introducing full-replacement HDHPs and a new wellbeing program," Willburn explains, noting that they previously had high utilization of their traditional PPO plan. "A big focus was making sure employees understood the change, but we also needed to give them tools and resources to be good consumers."

Communicating with healthcare system employees meant overcoming the demands of 24/7/365 operations. For clinical staff, their priority is patient care, making it hard to pull them off the floor for benefits meetings. The answer, Willburn discovered, was moving to more accessible, ongoing benefits communication geared towards changing workplace demographics.

Appealing to an Evolving Workforce

Over half the organization's employees are millennials, followed by baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Z. "Moving forward, our total rewards program has to appeal more to our primary audience," Willburn contends, "and millennials demand communications in different ways than the traditional boomer employee." Explaining that Nebraska Medicine's HR communications have always been very high-touch, they wanted to do a little less "hand-holding" and make sure employees had easy-to-access and self-service options for learning about their benefits. "As our population continues to evolve, we need to make communications available to employees in a variety of ways."

Willburn's team innovated with a 12-week, multi-channel campaign using GuideSpark Communicate Cloud, which educated employees about their new consumer-driven health plans and their wellbeing program.

Employees received messages via digital channels (e.g., email) and analog channels (e.g., postcards), introducing them to their new benefits and directing them to an interactive content experience for more information. Messages focused on the value and tax advantages of the new plans and the differences between the accounts associated with them. Additionally, Willburn says, "We found a 'champion' in every department and trained them to answer questions," which helped the HR team connect with employees via a "local person employees know and trust."

Accomplishing Enrollment Goals in Year One

Willburn expected that 80% of employees would enroll in their HDHP with HRA option because its plan design was most similar to the PPO—but the results were the exact opposite, with only 20% choosing that plan. "That was a 'wow' moment for us," Willburn says. "Not only did we reach 100% of our employees with our campaign, but the right people enrolled in the right plans." The healthier population picked one of the HDHP with an HSA options, while those with greater health needs picked the HDHP with the HRA.

"It was a bit of a surprise to us to see that many people move over to an HSA plan in the first year that it was offered," she continues. "Typically, you see that kind of migration over a three-year period!" She attributes this quick buy-in to the strong communication combined with the HSA funding they were providing. The communications campaign resonated with employees and the Nebraska Medicine's HR team has helped their employees chose the right path towards wellness.

GuideSpark Solutions

Benefits Guide

"We achieved in year one what we expected would take 2-3 years! Our employees have escalated so quickly on the consumerism scale. Before, they were asking no questions—but now, they're really paying attention. That's been another great outcome of launching a campaign with GuideSpark."

Laurie Willburn
Director of Total Rewards and HR Operations

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