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The importance of wellness programs

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Earlier this year I wrote a story titled, "Rightsizing the church: physical accountability [1]," about the need for all Catholics to make healthier choices in their lives.

Today's Dallas News has a similar story [2]. It offers an interesting strategy taking place in Texas dioceses.

> "The Catholic Employee Benefit Group had such an issue. The Irving-based benefit supplier to the Texas dioceses' 1,100 employees and family members experienced annual medical cost increases of 20 to 30 percent.
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> The group's population is older and more male-dominated than a typical company's employee population; many priests, for example, work until age 75.
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> After Advance Plan for Health conducted a health assessment, it discovered that poor diabetes management among 10 percent of the Catholic group's population was driving 80 percent of its health care costs.
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> Clergy Wellness Days with free health risk assessments were set up in each diocese. One diocese offered an incentive for employees who got an annual physical.
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> This year, their medical costs are expected to increase just 3 percent, an estimated $600,000 in savings from what costs would have been with a 20 percent cost increase.
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> "Each diocese was spending up to 30 percent of their day just dealing with insurance issues and claims," said Jim Smith, president of the Catholic Employee Benefit Group. "Now it only takes about 5 percent of our day. The plan has been a success. We're promoting it to other dioceses."

Source URL (retrieved on *10/25/2014 - 23:10*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/importance-wellness-programs

Links:
[1] http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/rightsizing-church-physical-accountability
[2] http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/bus/stories/092209dnbusHealthcareCosts.3f69313.html