

Midwest Business Group on Health (MBGH)

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION: Based in Chicago, the Midwest Business Group on Health is a not-for-profit coalition of 90-plus private and public employers that promotes collaboration to improve the cost and quality of health care.

INITIATION OF VBID PROGRAM/STRATEGY: Summer, 2007.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

- Adopt a VBID program.
- Improve diabetes chronic disease management.
- Balance quality and costs.
- Demonstrate clinical improvements in employees with diabetes.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS: MBGH's VBID program, "Taking Control of Your Health," is part of the Diabetes Ten City Challenge in which employers provide employees, dependents and retirees who have diabetes with a voluntary health benefit, waive the copayments for diabetes medications and supplies, and help people manage their diabetes with the help of a specially-trained pharmacist "coach." "Taking Control of Your Health" is a multi-year effort to address diabetes and other conditions that represent a significant health issue in the seven-county Chicago metropolitan area and in North Carolina. About 200 people are participating in the program, representing employees from Hospira, Inc., the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, and Pactiv Corporation. Jessica Westhoff, director of projects and communications at MBGH, says the consultations with pharmacists have been a positive addition to the waived copayments. MBGH is actively recruiting other employers to participate.

PROGRAM RESULTS: Although statistics on adherence to medications and costs associated with the program are not yet available, MBGH does indicate positive process measures after a year in the program: on average, patients' HbA1c levels dropped from 7.1 percent to 6.9 percent; systolic and diastolic blood pressure decreased from 129 and 78 to 125 and 76, respectively; LDL cholesterol fell from 92 to 87; and body mass index (BMI) fell from 32.3 to 31.