



Swinging for the Fences: H&B Implements SentryHealth Worksite Clinic

You could probably name an MLB pinch-hitter faster than you could name the nurses at your doctor's office. The people behind Louisville Slugger can do both. Employees at the famous bat-maker's parent company, H&B, count their onsite SentryHealth (formerly Edumedics) Nurse Practitioner as an MVP on their team. They know her by name – Amanda – and they trust her to care for their bodies and minds the way they care for bats and gloves.

Hillerich & Bradsby Company, aka H&B, based in Louisville, began considering SentryHealth's programming in 2011 to help workers in their factory, museum and corporate offices manage chronic conditions such as diabetes and high cholesterol, in addition to acute nuisances such as upper respiratory infections.

"Like everybody we're trying to manage healthcare costs," said Rick Poff, Director of Human Resources at H&B. "We're self-insured, and any money saved on claims is money saved for the company."

They secured permits to convert a small break room to an onsite clinic. The vending machines were moved out. They then purchased the exam table and other medical equipment, supplies and a refrigerator for the medications that the Nurse Practitioner, Amanda, dispenses. The workers, cautiously, began trickling in. Poff tells us how the SentryHealth initiative worked.

Q: What support does your SentryHealth clinic and Nurse Practitioner provide?

A: We have the chronic care and healthcare coaching programs to help people with diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and other kinds of disease management. Also, if someone has an upper respiratory problem or wants help with tobacco cessation, they can go speak with Amanda, the Nurse Practitioner. She is here Mondays and Thursdays, 8:30 to 4:30. Everyone has access to the clinic.

Q: Did workers embrace SentryHealth immediately?

A: Nancy, the former HR lead, started this initiative, and now she is retired. But I was here and saw how things went. I would say people were very hesitant at first because Amanda talks with them about personal medical issues, whether a prescription or a health problem. People tend to want to mask that from their employer. People were thinking that we would have access to all of their medical records, but nothing could be further from the truth.



Q: How did you cross that hurdle?

A: The Nurse Practitioner did a good job of breaking down the walls. She was very good at that. Little by little people would come on board. At first, we'd say, "Come get a flu shot; it's free!" and we'd get a dismal response. So, the Nurse Practitioner would go out and do a small talk, and that would build on itself.

Also, because of HIPAA people are beginning to trust that their info is being kept private. Today, they are convinced H&B doesn't have access to their personal medical data. We keep summary data but we don't want to know any more than that.

Q: In terms of saving lives or money, has SentryHealth scored any home runs, pardon the pun?

A: We look at savings almost monthly. But it's not just the money.

We had an employee and their spouse come in (because spouses have access to the clinic). The Nurse Practitioner did the blood work, and this person's cholesterol was 408 – he was a heart attack waiting to happen. The Nurse Practitioner said, "You need to leave here and go to the hospital; I will call ahead." How do you put a value on that? We probably prevented a heart attack from happening. Did we save \$25,000 or \$50,000?

Other borderline diabetics had not ever been diagnosed. In terms of diabetes, we will buy the supplies for you, which encourages you to use them. The alternative might be, "I can't afford that \$200, and I'm not going to take the drugs," so they go into a diabetic coma, then it's \$25,000 or \$30,000.

I would say we've got a big savings in tobacco usage. But it's hard to prove you've prevented lung cancer.



"I was skeptical that an employer-based clinic of limited scope could produce a meaningful ROI, but SentryHealth has proven that it can."

- John Hillerich IV, *President & CEO, H&B*

Q: Any other benefits from SentryHealth?

A: When you go through the list of employee benefits with a job candidate—we have a 401(k), and here's the match, etc.—they have heard it all before. But then when you talk to them about the SentryHealth clinic, you kind of wake them back up. Two things really sink in. We tell them, "If you're stuffed up, you can go visit the Nurse Practitioner and she can diagnose and prescribe drugs to you." That has at least two advantages for that employee: "I can come to work and get diagnosed, whereas the alternative is to take the day off, sit in the doctor's office and pay a copay."

And if the medication is on the list of (available) drugs, it will be delivered to your desk by noon and there's no charge to the employee. So not only are they not taking time off work, they're not standing in line at Walgreens with other sick people and not paying a copay.

Q: That is generous of you as a company!

A: I'm not saying we do it because just because we love our employees—we do—but it's also so we don't lose time. Also, it might cost us 10 bucks to cover the drug, where at Walgreens they pay a copay and we have to pay full price for the drug, maybe \$57. We get a tremendous discount on drugs because we are self-insured, so when we pay \$10 instead of \$57, it's good for us, too.

Q: How would you rate the overall health of your employee population?

A: We are a sports company, so generally speaking I would say we're a healthier-than-average company. We have several current and former athletes working here. With the increased utilization of the clinic, small symptoms when properly diagnosed continue to prevent additional medical claims on our insurance.

Q: How do you identify who might benefit from SentryHealth's programming and how do you encourage participation?

A: SentryHealth might look and see what Rita's prescription use was, and if she's being treated

for COPD, they'll send a letter out, saying, "Come visit the clinic." If they get drugs through the company they don't have to pay a copay. The only requirements are monthly or quarterly meetings with the Nurse Practitioner, depending on what program you're in, where Amanda will talk to them about medications and other lifestyle tips.

There are a lot of personal touches; Amanda will go down and say, "Brandon, you haven't been up yet this month." Whether it's a phone call or visit or letter or email, the more touches you have the more participation.

Q: What are some of the common conditions that SentryHealth helps your staff with?

A: Hypertension was the really big one initially. SentryHealth sends out quarterly summary reports about the number of our people who have high blood pressure and how they're doing. Most of it now is being well managed through medication. The copay incentive helped quite a bit because even if a prescription only costs \$50 a month, if you have an hourly employee working for \$12 an hour, \$50 is a big deal. To not have to pay that makes a real difference in terms of patient adherence.

Q: Any lessons about incentives or rewards for participation in SentryHealth programming?

A: We learned that some things work and some don't, so we tweaked the benefits along the way. We used to supply Chantix, Nicotine patches, lozenges and gum for tobacco cessation. We found people would come in and get it because it's free, but we'd see them smoke. We ended up spending crazy amounts of money. So, we stopped supplying that. They can still get the tobacco cessation products through their local pharmacy; however, we do not provide them through our clinic any longer.

Q: Any other changes in the clinic?

A: Initially we had the clinic three days a week until noon. When we switched to two days, we extended the hours; that works better for parents who need to bring in their kids. Amanda can see children who are over 24 months old. It's really helpful for parents, not paying a \$50 or \$60 co-pay.

Q: Any words of advice for another company that's going to add SentryHealth?

A: It's too easy as a company to set expectations too high. We went into it thinking employees would jump on board and think it was great, but it took a little bit of a time. Don't expect that you'll have 100 percent participation from the start.

A critical piece is you've got to have the right personality for the Nurse Practitioner. We've all been to the ER where it's all matter of fact—here's the clipboard. That type of approach doesn't fly here. They need to have a great bedside manner, be friendly and able to joke around with people.