System Challenges ‘U’ to Live Healthy

For many of us, the holidays are a season of excess. But with 2015 now in full swing, University of Colorado Health is offering employees an opportunity to start the new year with a step toward healthy habits.

The six-week “Live Healthy UHealth Challenge” is open to all employees for a one-time $10 enrollment fee. The program offers online tools and resources to help employees track their activity, eating habits, sleep patterns, and other measures of healthy living. The emphasis is on friendly competition: Participants will take on weekly “wellness challenges,” rack up points, and follow their progress versus others on a leader board.

A winner in each of UHealth’s three regions will receive a $100 gift card to Sprouts or Sports Authority.

“We want to surpass that with the Live Healthy Challenge,” said Anna Taylor, employee well being coordinator for UHealth South (Memorial Hospital). Taylor said her team planned to conduct “guerilla marketing” at all UHealth hospitals via floor-to-floor trips to notify employees of the challenge and sign them up.

“We hope to generate some buzz,” Taylor said.

The new challenge is a prelude to the system-wide online Personal Health Assessment (PHA) and biometric screenings, which are scheduled to begin Feb. 2 and run through May 15, said Deborah Jones, director of employee health and well being for UHealth. Like last year, employees who are enrolled in a CU Health Plan and take both the PHA and the biometric screening will receive a $10 deduction from their health insurance premium each pay period – a total of $240 for the year, Jones said.

“We see the Live Healthy Challenge as a way for employees to kick-start their efforts to stay engaged with improving their health,” Jones said.

The broad aim of these and other health and wellness programs is to help UHealth manage more effectively the tens of millions of dollars it spends each year to provide health care for its employees. Healthy employees are also generally more productive and more engaged with their jobs. That, in turn, helps to reduce turnover and improve service to patients and families, leaders say.

But the big picture is composed of many individual snapshots. That’s why the Live Healthy Challenge includes an opportunity for staffers to share their stories of success in meeting their health and wellness goals.

“The more participants that we get talking about their experiences, the heavier the engagement will be,” Taylor said. “That could open...”
the door for more health and wellness possibilities for employees. We want people to tell their stories and help to mold the future.”

To enroll in the Live Healthy UCHealth Challenge, visit the Source. Early participants will be eligible for prize drawings during the first and second weeks of the challenge.