

MY VIEW, Tallahassee Democrat, February 12, 2008

It has always given me a sense of pride that my company, FBMC, has a Wellness Team that advocates employee health and wellbeing. It has been in operation for several years now, and while we have budgeted dollars toward wellness-oriented activities, we haven't had a methodology to measure the impact the Team has had on employee health or a way to quantify the return on our investment. When the current Wellness Team Leader came to me with the suggestion to join the Working Well Initiative, I realized that this would help us track and monitor the productivity and success rate of our program.

Over the past year, FBMC's association with the Working Well Initiative has provided a road map that has helped us take our internal wellness program to the next level. Instead of hit-or-miss exercise and dietary plans, we now have a focused program that not only assists the company in tracking progress, but it also helps inspire employees to participate.

FBMC has now joined the Wellness Councils of America and is currently working toward achieving Well Workplace recognition. To reach this goal, our company is now offering onsite fitness and wellness classes, and we have additional initiatives slated for 2008.

One of our recent and most popular programs is a 12-week incentive campaign call "The New You", which is designed to promote weight loss. FBMC has pledged to pay each employee who loses 5 percent of their body weight \$50, and each employee who loses 10 percent of their body weight will receive \$100. To help facilitate this program, we have arranged for a weight management instructor to come onsite to teach weekly weight-management classes after hours. We began this program January 2008, and had 107 employees participate in the first weigh-in. Considering the fact that there are 250 employees in our Tallahassee office, this was a phenomenal response.

Of course, we owe a great deal of gratitude to the Working Well Initiative for their input and encouragement. I should also mention that we met our weight management instructor at one of the Working Well luncheons. Additionally, Mary Barley, co-chair of the Working Well Initiative, has provided us with help in marketing the program to our employees and arranged for a ZUMBA instructor to teach classes at our office.

We are currently drafting an operating plan and preparing Health Risk Assessments to provide data and ensure that our initiatives are results oriented. Our ultimate goal is to ensure our employees are fit and healthy. This helps FBMC in two ways. First, a healthy employee is going to be happier and more productive. And secondly, company health initiatives will help us to reduce our company's health insurance costs. It's a win-win situation.

**Lorraine Strickland**  
**FBMC**  
**President & CEO**