

Today, many companies offer their employees some form of health prevention or wellness promotion program. Companies have learned that prevention not only improves employees' overall health and productivity, but also lowers the costs of medical claims. Ingalls Occupational Health Program teams up with large and small area businesses to deliver the services that help achieve workplace wellness.

One of those businesses is **Lanco/Mi-Jack Products, Inc.**, which is based in Hazel Crest and manufactures large overhead gantry cranes that move heavy loads on and off trailers and containers on trains. The company sends employees to Ingalls for pre-placement physicals and workers' compensation injuries. Physicians at Ingalls Occupational Health

Workplace wellness initiatives pay off

Clinics in Tinley Park and Calumet City treat injury and disease related to the work place and job function, as well as conduct drug and alcohol testing and on-site services such as wellness initiatives, vaccinations, healthy eating and fitness seminars.

In December 2004, Ingalls Occupational Health helped Lanco/Mi-Jack and its health insurance provider, United Health Care, introduce a pilot incentive plan to promote good health. The plan, called "The New You in 52" gives monetary rewards to employees for consistent efforts throughout the year in healthy eating, fitness, weight loss and smoking cessation. A short questionnaire and on-site testing twice a year help employees identify specific health problems, and classes and counseling help employees set realistic wellness goals. Employees who reach their goals are eligible for up to \$200 per year from the company.

In just the first year, Lanco/Mi-Jack has collected many stories about employees who have lowered their blood pressure, lost weight and taken control of their health. The most amazing case is that of an employee, age 45, who found out in December 2004 that his blood sugar was an abnormally high 279. When the employee informed his physician, the physician advised him to lose weight and watch his diet.

Deborah Muszynski, R.N., an Ingalls nurse who works on-site at Lanco/Mi-Jack, was concerned that the doctor did not put him on medication. She gave him an Ingalls Outpatient Diabetes Management Center information packet and suggested he test his sugar at home daily. Six months later, his blood sugar was 241, still a high number. Muszynski and a nurse from United Healthcare urged the man to take more aggressive action with his physician. That's when change really happened.

He started on glucose lowering medication but decided he didn't want to be on it forever. Through an Ingalls Diabetes Nutrition class, he learned the importance of testing and managing his blood sugar with diet and exercise. He now eats three small meals and two snacks a day, walks on a treadmill for one hour each morning and works out at a gym three to five times a week. His blood sugar has stabilized to a normal 98, he's lost 35 pounds and is down two pants sizes. He has amazed even his doctor, who says that he may soon be able to come off his medication completely.

"Although we're starting to collect statistics on our wellness initiative, the most impressive results are already evident for us," said Bob Seeman, the company's Safety Director. "The fact that we've identified serious conditions or revealed problems or potential risks in people who were unaware of their risks is very important to a family-oriented company like Lanco/Mi-Jack. We've even tested younger people whose results were off the chart!"



From left: Jack Lanigan, Sr., Jack Lanigan and William Lanigan

A company that values its employees enough to implement health and wellness programs reaps additional benefits. For instance, Lanco/Mi-Jack boasts the lowest employee turnover in the nation! "Companies are discovering that a healthy workforce means a productive workforce. Long-term care costs are reduced, and employees begin to think proactively about their health."

Seeman also points out that the company's partnership with Ingalls Occupational Health has delivered many advantages. "It's a benefit to be able to contract with Ingalls for an onsite nurse like Muszynski because it ensures that test results and health risks are all confidential. No one in the company has access to employee names and health conditions."

Seeman sums up the company's partnership with Ingalls by quoting Mi-Jack founder Jack Lanigan, Sr., who often noted that, when it comes to success, "People make the difference."

Ingalls Occupational Health Network is available to assist your company with services and to help your employees to be healthier. Our clinics are located at the Ingalls Family Care Centers in Tinley Park and Calumet City. For more information about the Ingalls Occupational Health Network, please call 708.915.4806.