Columbia Forest Products is an employee-owned forestry manufacturing company headquartered in North Carolina. The company’s 1,350 U.S.-based employees are spread out across nine rural locations from Oregon to Maine. While many employees at Columbia Forest Products have jobs that involve physical activity, the work is often repetitive in nature and not always conducive to a healthy lifestyle. Columbia Forest Products’ population shows a higher-than-average risk for illness and disease, and health care costs that are nearly $800 higher per person than average.

**Higher engagement. Lower risks. Bigger savings.**

99% used myCigna.com health & wellness tools and support

5x more engaged in health and wellness coaching program over prior year

48% moved from “high/medium” to “low/medium” health risk

50% medical cost trend reduction

In 12 months, initiative to establish a culture of health produced significant results.

Management at Columbia Forest Products was convinced that the key to lowering employee medical costs was to lower employee health risks, and they set a multi-year plan in motion to reach these two goals.

1. Catastrophic claims were excluded from medical cost savings calculation.
Charting the path to better health

With strong management support to back them up, Columbia Forest Products’ human resource department worked together with Cigna to implement a comprehensive health and wellness program across the company. A wellness committee was formed and trained throughout the year, including “wellness champions” in each company location. The wellness champions were key to the successful implementation of the health and wellness program – an important link between employees and management. In addition, specific goals and objectives were set for each location based on each population’s unique needs and wants.

In 2011, Columbia Forest Products’ CEO launched the program to employees via a video. In the video, he personally committed to actively participate, setting the goal of losing 30 pounds for himself. He encouraged employees to set their own personal goals, and together with Cigna, Columbia Forest Products provided health and well-being services to help employees reach their goals:

- **Cigna incentive points program** – tied to completion of health assessment
- **Chronic condition coaching** – to help employees with chronic conditions get and stay healthier
- **Cigna Health Advisor® coaching** – to help individuals lower their risk for future illness and disease
- **Lifestyle management coaching** – to help people quit smoking and better manage stress and weight
- **Cigna behavioral advantage and employee assistance program** – to provide mental health and work/life balance support
- **Cigna pharmacy and dental coverage** – for a truly holistic approach to total health

**In one year: Nearly half of the population lowers risk status**

Columbia Forest Products’ efforts to get more employees on the path to better health were widely successful. In the first year of its health and wellness program, the company saw significant improvement in employee health engagement and risk reduction that helped drive significant cost savings:

**Increase in health engagement**

- 99% used online health and wellness tools
- 94% completed health assessment
- Almost 50% increase in those actively engaged in chronic condition support coaching
- Over 5x more people actively engaged in health and wellness coaching

**Reduction in health risks**

- 48% of individuals initially identified as “high/medium risk” moved to a lower health risk status
- 25% increase in number of people with desirable cholesterol level
- 15% decrease in number of people that had high blood pressure
- 16% increase in number of people with desirable waist circumference
- 18% increase in number of people with desirable BMI
- 46% decrease in number of people with abnormal glucose levels

**Reduction in health costs**

- 50% reduction in medical cost trend from prior year

**Looking ahead**

Encouraged by strong year-one results, Columbia Forest Products and Cigna continue to build on this successful health and wellness program. Beginning in 2012, all locations are now tobacco-free. Future plans include adding targeted communications to drive even further engagement, as well as expanding to outcome-based incentives, rewarding employees for achieving health improvement results.