



Safety Pays Dividends at Glade Run Lutheran Services

In just three years' time, Glade Run Lutheran Services has realized an 80% cost of claims reduction in employee work-related injuries, which has significantly reduced its overall workers' compensation costs. As claims have steadily decreased, so have insurance premiums.

Overview

Since 1854, Glade Run Lutheran Services has been delivering essential services to the vulnerable and at-risk. Each year the non-profit organization provides mental health, social, developmental and educational services to more than 2,000 children, youth and families at offices in Beaver Falls, Butler, Pittsburgh and Zelienople, where its picturesque campus spans 325 acres of rural landscape.

With its mission of "Linking Faith and Service," a top priority for Glade Run is to provide the safest and most nurturing environment possible for students, clients and employees, particularly since many employees' job functions involve working with children suffering the devastating effects of mental illness.

Three years ago Glade Run set out to take a more comprehensive approach to promoting safety throughout the entire organization. Today, it is not only reaping the rewards of improved safety, but it has also achieved significant reductions in its workers' compensation program costs that has enabled the organization to focus more time and resources on its front-line mission of helping children in need.

It Starts at the Top

As with any new program, success is often dependent on the commitment and buy-in of top management. According to Scott McCall of the HDH Group, "Whenever an organization experiences reductions in staff-related workers' compensation claims like that evidenced at Glade Run, it's usually because the entire organization has made a strong commitment to safety - from the top to the bottom. That has certainly been the case at Glade Run."

Glade Run's Safety Committee is comprised of the organization's staff and management, along with representatives from the HDH Group, Glade Run's insurance broker and advisory firm, and Highmark Casualty Insurance Company, its workers' compensation insurance carrier.

The entire Glade Run safety team meets monthly to discuss and address safety issues. Topics discussed include on- and off-campus safety concerns for children and staff, building and communications issues, and injury reports. A sub-group of the committee, the Injury Review Process Committee, also meets monthly to examine the root causes of any recent staff injury in order to identify improved prevention measures to avoid or reduce similar instances from occurring in the future.

"With help and guidance from the HDH Group, our safety program is not only improving safety – it has reduced our insurance costs."

Dr. Charles Lockwood
Glade Run Executive Director

With over 500 employees throughout the organization at various locations, the Safety Committee determined that it needed a way to get all of the employees involved. Their strategy was two-fold: communications and incentives.

"Everyone understands that safety is important," shared Dr. Charles Lockwood, executive director of Glade Run and a Lutheran pastor. "With the help and guidance from the HDH Group, our safety program includes frequent communications and outreach, which has helped us to connect the dots more clearly between safety, employee and student morale, lost time and costs – so everyone understands how accidents take away resources from our programs."

To recognize employees' efforts, the Safety Committee established a monthly safety rewards program. Teams of employees have been created and each month eligible



teams are entered to win a prize drawing if they have met two important safety criteria: 1) no missed days of work that calendar month due to a workplace injury; and 2) reporting any injuries to supervisors and human resources within 24 hours of the accident.

According to HDH Group's McCall, "We have incorporated various forms of awareness programs that involve all of the employees, which help focus attention on lost time incidents and timely reporting. This along with hosting frequent employee appreciation functions has helped to send the message that Glade Run takes safety very seriously."

Safety Pays

Dr. Lockwood also credits the reduction in claims in part to the frequency and extensiveness of staff training and the implementation of the Sanctuary Model®, an organizational framework developed by Dr. Sandra Bloom that provides individuals and organizations the necessary skills to create and sustain non-violent lives and systems. Glade Run was selected by the State of Pennsylvania to implement the model and is currently in the second of a three-year implementation process. The Sanctuary Model® promotes physical, psychological, social and moral safety, including the development of individual safety plans for staff and clients that help support the organization's safe and nurturing environment.

According to Lockwood, "This program reinforces and extends the work of our Safety Committee and has helped to create a culture of safety throughout the entire organization that has paid dividends in a variety of areas."

Glade Run's concerted effort to increase awareness, employee cohesiveness, communication and teamwork has resulted in a significant decrease in loss time from work and a significant reduction in workers' compensation claims. In just three years' time the organization has realized an eighty percent cost of claims reduction in employee work-related injuries, which has significantly reduced its overall

Protecting the "Bottom-Line"

Cost savings as a result of improved safety have helped protect Glade Run from some of the financial challenges currently facing non-profits, according to a recent industry survey:

- ◆ About 40 percent of respondents have seen further declines in contributions in the first five months of 2010 at the same time that a majority (63 percent) have seen an increase in demand for their services.
- ◆ Those involved in mental health and crisis intervention were more likely to report a decline in contributions (51 percent).
- ◆ 78 percent of mental health organizations also reported an increase in demand for their services, well above average (with 42 percent reporting a "great" increase in demand).
- ◆ A number of organizations that rely largely or in part on reimbursement for services from state and local governments were experiencing cash flow issues due to delays in payments, and were facing upcoming state budget cuts nervously

Source:

The Effect of the Economy on the Nonprofit Sector: A June 2010 Survey
- GuideStar

workers' compensation costs. As their claims have steadily decreased over the past several years, so too have their insurance premiums.

"Safety plays a central role in determining an organization's workers' compensation premium and costs", said Matt Piroch of Highmark Casualty Insurance Company. "What has been accomplished at Glade Run with HDH is impressive, and it can be achieved at other organizations. The concepts are the same – but the key is execution. The entire organization at Glade Run has committed to safety as a top priority, and as a result, they are reaping the benefits of a safer work place, and in turn, of lower workers' compensation costs."

The HDH Group is an employee-owned professional services firm offering risk management, employee benefits, surety, and alternative risk insurance solutions. HDH works with clients across a wide range of industries, including transportation, healthcare, construction, manufacturing, information technology, financial services, the public sector, and others. An owner in Assurex Global, the largest global network of independent insurance brokers with over 500 offices across 6 continents, HDH Group combines specialized industry and insurance expertise with an extensive national and international reach. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, HDH also has offices in Harrisburg and Erie, Pennsylvania.



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