

## **Boston Business Journal**

# **Champions in Health Care: Putnam's Michael Seagren**

### **Putnam's fitness push makes for healthier bottom line**

**Edward Mason, special to the Journal**

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Seven years ago, Michael Seagren, an employee benefits executive at Boston-based Putnam Investments, wanted to cut the fund firm's fat when it came to health care costs.

So, he convinced Putnam to hire Wellness Workdays of Hingham to design a wellness program.

"We started our wellness program several years ago as a strategy to improve the overall health of our employees and to help migrate increasing health care costs," said Seagren, a benefits analyst at Putnam. "Healthier employees translate to lower costs for employees and the company and ultimately lead to workers who are more productive and

have a better quality of life."

The programs encourage better nutrition and stress management. They help workers monitor their blood pressure and stop smoking. To get people moving, there are activity based accelerometer and pedometer programs, Seagren said.

Putnam also offered specific behavior-altering programs, such as the 12-week Nutrition for a Lifetime program, led by Wellness Workdays' registered dietitians.

For instance, in 2012, 92 employees completed that program and lost 350 pounds and 57.5 Body Mass Index points. Putnam and Wellness Workdays estimates the cost avoidance associated with those changes (BMI points lost, changes in health status and increased physical activity) at \$47,462.

A year later, 52 people lost 150 pounds and 22.7 BMI points. The estimated cost avoidance associated with those changes came in at \$55,767.

"Healthy employees are happier employees leading to increased productivity and morale at work as well as to improved quality of life when out of work," Seagren said.

"We have worked hard to build a culture of well-being."

There's been no grumbling from management, Seagren said — they're behind the fitness push.