

# City of Edmond employees benefit from wellness programs

**James Coburn**

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EDMOND — Melisa Vinson is more conscientious about what she eats since she came to work for the City of Edmond two years ago

A wellness program keeps her energized by exercising, attending the healthy lunches, participating in health screenings and “being more proactive and preventative than reactive when something does happen,” she said.

The City of Edmond offers a comprehensive wellness program to its 652 employees and is certified as a healthy business through the Oklahoma Turning Point this year, said Vinson, the City of Edmond benefits specialist in the human resources department.

Much like with other employers offering similar benefits, wellness programs save the city money by minimizing insurance costs, improving productivity and minimizing absenteeism, said Vinson, a certified health promotion director through the Cooper Institute.

The city's insurance package covers the first \$300 of wellness benefits, but the city goes beyond that with its Wellness Wins program.

Employee fitness is enhanced through partnerships with the University of Central Oklahoma Wellness Center and the Edmond YMCA. Employees also may choose to walk, jog or bicycle with other city employees while earning points for work days off or gift certificates to local sporting good stores. Employees also can redeem their points for wellness cups and gym bags.

City employees received wellness points Wednesday afternoon by helping Edmond's elderly or those needing assistance place fallen tree branches on the curbside.

They also receive wellness points for attending wellness seminar training. For example, a physician presents a health topic each month for a healthy lunch series that employees may attend. Dental checkups, annual physicals and eye exams each provide wellness points.

“We also sponsor employees for the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon 5-K. We pay the registration fee,” Vinson said.

Each February, the city sponsors a free health fair in which city employees need not pay for lab testing for blood work. Employees' flu shots and four specialty health screenings are paid for by the city.

“We offer weight management classes twice a year and let families participate in that,” Vinson said. “We did a 10,000-step challenge where we provided odometers to families that sign up.”

Wellness is a quality benefit offered by the city, said Linda Vaughn, who works in the purchasing department.

“It's an every day reminder,” Vaughn said. “I think in the long-run it benefits our health care. And I think we probably have one of the better wellness programs.”