Metabolic Syndrome: A Total Approach for Change

Helping Employees Live Healthy, Productive Lives
What is Metabolic Syndrome?

Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of conditions that together place people at high risk for developing a host of debilitating illnesses. Identifying this early risk indicator for major health care cost drivers such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes can help lower future health care costs. Metabolic syndrome is characterized by a number of factors, including elevated:

- Waist circumference
- Triglycerides
- Glucose
- Blood pressure, and
- Reduced HDL or “good” cholesterol

People who have three or more of these factors are at a higher risk of developing chronic diseases. Once identified, people with metabolic syndrome need to learn how to manage these risk factors as early as possible, and address a lesser health concern before it becomes a chronic and costly health condition.

An estimated 50 million Americans are living with metabolic syndrome.

That’s equivalent to 23 percent of the adult population — with a much higher prevalence in the working-age population.

Source: American Heart Association

Chances are some of your employees are at risk for metabolic syndrome.
Not only is your employees' health and wellness at risk, the financial burden of living with metabolic syndrome is also severe. Working-age individuals with metabolic syndrome have significantly higher medical costs compared to those without it. Every month, one employee with metabolic syndrome can cost $626 in medical expenses**. Compare that to an employee without this condition who has, in general, medical costs of $367 per month. That's an excess cost of $259**.

A published study of claims from two million adult patients age 20 and older, found that individuals who take medications for at least three of the risk factors associated with metabolic syndrome had an annual drug spend more than four times that of all other patients.

Source: Medco Health Solutions, October 1, 2004

As Health Risks Rise, Costs Go Up

The extra $259 per month** in medical expenses that an employee with metabolic syndrome can incur, may be broken down this way:

- $46 is attributed to additional cardiovascular episodes
- $213 is related to higher expenses for the prevalence of related conditions, particularly cardiovascular disease and diabetes

** Metabolic Syndrome and Employer Sponsored Medical Benefits: An Actuarial Study, Kathryn Eisenbrey, FSA, Bruce Pyenson, FSA, WMAA, Kosuke Iwasaki, FIAJ, MAAA, Milliman, New York, NY September 2007
Improving your employees’ health encourages them to regain control of their own wellness. People who struggle with metabolic syndrome may also need help viewing diet and exercise as preventive steps that can help improve their general health. You can offer support to them.

Empower your employees to live more healthy and productive lives by offering an innovative, holistic approach to managing this condition. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma (BCBSOK) offers a range of help from self-directed, online resources to an intensive personalized experience.

BCBSOK can offer you resources and approaches to help manage metabolic syndrome that combine health, wellness and medical management programs.

Healthier people can be happier, more productive employees. Healthy employees can lower overall health costs. At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma, we have solutions that promote healthier lifestyles.

A Commitment to Promote Behavioral Change

Metabolic syndrome indicates a need for intensive lifestyle modification.

Source: International Diabetes Federation

www.bcbsok.com

Experience. Wellness, Everywhere.
Health, Wellness, Lifestyle Solutions

On-site or Online Workshops: Consists of a 10-week series of on-site or online classes led by health coaches. (There is a charge per participant for workshops.)

Workshops are designed to encourage permanent behavior change by:

• Teaching participants how to eat the foods they like in appropriate amounts
• Focusing on weight loss through understanding eating and hunger cues, accessing online diet trackers to help log behavior
• Identifying ways to incorporate regular exercise into personal lifestyles
• Providing pre- and post-workshop biometric screenings for Body Mass Index (BMI), waist circumference, blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol
• Providing personalized two-way e-mail support from health coaches

In February 2008, BCBSOK conducted a Metabolic Syndrome Program for 200 employees. Results show that BCBSOK employee participants in the intensive, on-site workshop experienced meaningful outcomes:

• 37.6 percent reversed their metabolic syndrome in 10 weeks
• An average weight loss of 12.9 lbs*
• 29.9 percent reported a reduction in medication usage

Your employees may also experience better health outcomes with this workplace program.

*Results show 91.9 percent of participants lost this amount of weight.

A Multi-Faceted Approach to the Fight Against Metabolic Syndrome

Using intensive education, support, rewards and multiple touch points, the BCBSOK Metabolic Syndrome Program is a wide-ranging approach that may result in fewer claims, lower health care costs and a healthier, more productive workforce.
Resources for Change

The Metabolic Syndrome Program offers additional resources and tools designed to help decrease the incidence or severity of metabolic syndrome for workshop participants before and after the program. Members with Blue Care Connection® have access to the following resources:

Worksite Wellness Events: A menu of on-site events that teach preventive self-care and aid in the development and maintenance of healthier lifestyle choices. There is a separate charge for these events.

Lifestyle Management Support:
- Telephonic Coaching: Participants are assigned a health coach who monitors participant weight loss or smoking cessation progress. Employees can self-enroll by calling the Customer Service phone number on the back of their ID card.
- Targeted Online Support: smoking and weight-loss support is available to members through the Personal Health Manager.

Personal Health Manager: An online resource that connects participants to information and tools designed to help maintain or improve their health.

Blue Points™
Encourage your employees to use Blue Points where they can earn rewards for engaging in healthy activities.** Blue Points can be redeemed for gift certificates, airline miles, fitness items and much more.

BlueExtras™
Through the BlueExtras program, BCBSOK members can take advantage of promotional offers for a variety of health and wellness products and services.

** Program rules are subject to change without prior notice.

BCBSOK offers proven strategies for impacting positive behavioral changes that can last a lifetime, helping employees live healthier, more productive lives.
To learn more about the workshops and to determine if the Metabolic Syndrome Program is right for your employees, contact your BCBSOK representative.

www.bcbsok.com