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**LIFESPAN WINS BENEFITS AWARD FOR
IMPROVING HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES**

Addressing the obesity epidemic with outcomes-based incentives and physician support

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (April 22, 2014) – The [New England Employee Benefits Council](#) named Lifespan, Rhode Island's largest health system, as a recipient of the 2013 "Best Practice" award, presented annually to the companies exhibiting novel, innovative, and impactful strategies in employee benefits.

Currently, 60 percent of the U.S. workforce is either overweight or obese with obesity directly contributing to the incidence of chronic illnesses. Lifespan worked with Abacus Health Solutions to develop a wellness program focusing on healthier weight and tobacco cessation.

The [Lifespan Healthy Rewards](#) wellness program is designed to manage risk in the overall population by using incentives and targeted communications to engage high-risk individuals and their physicians to proactively manage their health and reduce chronic illnesses. This program is designed to reduce health care costs while also incentivizing healthy employees and employees who actively take the steps needed to maintain or improve their health.

“Engaging employees and dependents to become better health care consumers and to take more responsibility for the cost and care of their own health is a core component of the change happening in our health system today,” said Howard Dulude, vice president, Human Resources Operations and Lifespan Health. “Lifespan is in the unique position to encourage primary care physicians to participate in the change process to support today’s emerging models of care”.

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As the administrator of the program, [Abacus Health Solutions](#) worked with Lifespan to design the program and manage key program components, including communicating with employees and physicians, tracking program compliance, and incentive administration.

“We are excited about the health improvements achieved in year one and the capability to track ongoing results and be able to tie those improvements to direct cost reductions going forward,” said [David K. Ahern, Ph.D.](#), senior scientist and program architect from Abacus. “We look forward to implementing phase 2 of the program in 2014 focusing on continued weight loss and ongoing weight-regain prevention.”

The approach is referred to as an outcomes-based incentive design as the reward is dependent on a result or improvement (weight loss and/or becoming tobacco free) not just participation in the program. Strategies like this are backed by behavior change principles and the latest research for long-term, successful weight management. Driving members to their doctor ensures proper care coordination with the health care system that is missing from traditional wellness and health plan-based disease management.

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About Lifespan

Lifespan (www.lifespan.org) is a five-partner not-for-profit health care system based in Providence, R.I. Formed in 1994; Lifespan includes three teaching hospitals of The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University: Rhode Island Hospital and its Hasbro Children’s Hospital; The Miriam Hospital; and Bradley Hospital, the nation’s first psychiatric hospital for children. It also includes Newport Hospital, a community hospital offering a broad range of health services, and Gateway Healthcare, the state’s largest provider of community behavioral health care. Lifespan teaching hospitals are among the top recipients in the country of research funding from the National Institutes of Health. The hospitals received nearly \$81 million in external research funding in fiscal 2012. All Lifespan-affiliated partners are charitable organizations that depend on support from the community to provide programs and services.

About Abacus Health Solutions

Abacus and its principals are nationally recognized behavioral scientists and health experts who have been providing cost-containment solutions for over two decades. Abacus has developed numerous evidence-based e-health tools financed in part with grant funding from the National Institutes of Health and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Today, Abacus provides employers and benefits brokers with an array of unique programs and services to address wellness and chronic condition management, specializing in integrating behavioral science principles into evidence-based benefit plans and providing incentive program design and administration. Visit <http://www.abacushealth.com>.