



GENERAL EXCELLENCE

Reliant Medical Group, Worcester

COVERING THE BASES, FROM WELLNESS TO ADOPTION ASSISTANCE

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Reliant Medical Group has a long history in Central Massachusetts, but when it comes to keeping employees happy, the company is anything but parochial.

Founded in 1929 as Fallon Clinic, the primary and specialty-care physician group implemented a name change in October 2011. The idea, according to Marketing Operations Manager Nicole Capuano, was to reduce confusion between the company and Fallon Community Health Plan.

"We are two separate organizations but many people believed you had to have (Fallon Community Health Plan) to see a Fallon Clinic doctor, which is not true," Capuano said. "We also felt that our new name better distinguished us in the marketplace and describes what we do: provide medical services."

Despite a fresh name, employees say programs aimed at improving the quality of life for employees at the offices are longstanding, popular, and make the workday more rewarding.

Programs designed to accomplish that goal include a lunchtime yoga program; weight loss challenges; 5K events and other fitness challenges; workday flexibility, including telecommuting options; professional development opportunities, and even an adoption assistance credit program.

Randi Nichols, executive vice president of human resources and operations support services, said such programs are invaluable at larger employers such as Reliant, which employs about 2,000 at more than 20 sites.

"Especially being spread out, and each site having its own culture, to an extent," Nichols said. "It's important for people to feel part of a

bigger community."

In addition to its workplace engagement programs, Nichols said Reliant strives to create an overall atmosphere in which employees feel they can have good work-life balance. This way, productivity and satisfaction increase.

"They feel cared about," Nichols said.

Helping With Adoption

Kim Flynn, a patient service specialist in Reliant's Auburn office, said her case is a testament to that approach.

Flynn, a Reliant employee for 13 years, found herself swimming in mounting costs related to the adoption of her son, Jake, in

to return to work, the company offered her reduced hours so she could spend some weekdays with Jake.

"They're very, very thoughtful when it comes to anything 'family,'" Flynn said.

Embracing Wellness

You might assume that employees of a health care provider have a natural inclination toward wellness, but this wasn't always the case for Lynn Dero, a patient service specialist in Reliant's Milford office. Dero said in that recent years, she finally got healthy "after many years of screwing up." Part of her success is due to Reliant's wellness programs, which Dero now looks forward to with enthusiasm.

Dero came in third place in the company's recent Win to Lose Challenge, in which employees weighed in at the beginning and end of a six-week period to gauge who could lose the most weight. She won a \$100 gift card, but the motivation the contest generated was the true prize.

The contest had about 170 participants who stuck with it until the end. The company sent around healthy recipe ideas in the meantime, which Dero especially appreciated.

"It kept us working at it," Dero said.

Then, in mid-October, Dero participated in the company 5K walk/run, which she said is a great way to get to know employees from Reliant's other sites.

Opportunities like these mean a lot to Dero. She began working for the company more than 20 years ago, left for nine years, and then returned 10 years ago as she was looking for a job she could enjoy until she retires. After her time away from Reliant, Dero said she wishes she never left.

The approach of helping employees get better "makes a difference," she said. ■



Staff members at Reliant Medical Group's Milford office recently participated in a weight-loss challenge and company 5K race, two workplace wellness programs Reliant offers employees. From left to right: Lynn Dero, Kathy Bowen, Kathleen Donnelly and Linda Veneziano.

2008. But she found some relief when Reliant provided her with an adoption assistance credit of \$2,000.

"With the vast amount of expenses you go through with adoption, it was wonderful to have that," Flynn said.

The adoption process took 11 months, Flynn said, and when she arrived at home with her infant son, Reliant employees threw her a baby shower. When it was time