

Healthiest Employers: Extra-large companies go beyond garden-variety wellness programs



Southcoast Health hosts onsite farmers' markets, which are held weekly from June to September/October at four of its larger locations in Fall River, New Bedford, Fairhaven and Wareham.

One might think it would be easier for the state's largest firms to implement comprehensive wellness programs for employees, considering the larger financial resources available to them.

But larger also introduces complexity, especially for those firms with numerous remote locations spread across a region or even the nation and globe.

So the seven winners of this year's Healthiest Employers in the extra-large category (1,500 employees and up) not only offer their employees a rich array of wellness programs — many of them unique to their companies — but they also tend to go out of their way to make sure that everyone, not just those at corporate headquarters, are linked into programs.

The winners of this year's BBJ Healthiest Employers, extra-large category are, appearing in their ranked order based on their rankings by health-analytics firm Springbuk: [Fidelity](#)

[Investments](#), Southcoast Health, State Street Corp., Tufts Health Plan, [Blue Cross](#) and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Benchmark Senior Living of Massachusetts and Lowell General Hospital.

To be clear, each of the winners has innovative, and sometimes unique, wellness programs.

At Boston's [Fidelity Investments](#), [Brian Harty](#), head of global benefits strategy at Fidelity, says one of the giant financial firm's most popular programs is its healthy dining "fit" program, available at cafeterias at its larger campuses spread across the region and country.

The program offers snacks in "grab and go kiosks" as well as healthy breakfast, lunch and other meals — and Fidelity has developed a loyalty program that allows employees to earn free healthy meals, Harty said in a statement. Last November, Fidelity introduced "Gift Your Meal," in which, rather than receiving a free rewards meal, employees can opt to have the meal donated to a local food bank.

In general, Harty said Fidelity is constantly looking at ways to introduce new wellness offerings that go "beyond physical wellness to include financial wellness, career, social and emotional support and resiliency."

At Southcoast Health, [Kristi Aimone](#), the organization's wellness coordinator, said there are a number of popular programs offered to its employees at its three hospitals in New Bedford, Fall River and Wareham and its dozens of other off-site locations, all falling under its multifaceted "HealthQuest" wellness program.

One of them is Southcoast's "Mindfulness at Work" program, which allows employees to disconnect from work and deal with life's stresses, with the help of an instructor, via meditation, yoga and other services.

Southcoast has also partnered with [Virgin Pulse](#) to provide an online wellness portal, in-person health stations and activity tracking devices, which are available to all employees to guide them in their personal health goals, according to the company.

Said Aimone of Southcoast's overall philosophy on wellness: "Healthier caregivers are better caregivers. It just makes sense."

As far as connecting remote employees to wellness programs, Southcoast's web portal is not unique. State Street Corp. notes that its "BeWell" program is "easily accessible to employees through the global BeWell intranet site, which is a 'one-stop-shop' for all things related to well-being at State Street.