

Nutraceuticals World



Got Life? One company's value-based, integrated life and health management capabilities put the "well" in well-being.

By Joanna Cosgrove

The concept of healthcare comes in many incarnations but one healthcare provider has taken a decidedly different approach. Nurtur, headquartered in Farmington, CT, created its own brand of healthcare designed to empower people to transform their lives and well-being with education, life balance and motivation. Tasked with a self-imposed mission to "deliver the best outcomes and greatest return for every dollar invested in health," the company's unique approach combines intensive motivational techniques with educational resources and tools to encourage healthy behaviors, promote healthier workplaces and communities, improve productivity and reduce healthcare costs.

Nurtur was formed in 2007 and has evolved into a partnership that spans five companies. Disease management leaders Cardium Health and AirLogix came together with the vision to create Nurtur, and in 2008 acquired WorkLife Innovations to help execute the newly formed Nurtur's strategic vision to integrate health management with life. This past February, Nurtur acquired ActivHealth and Wellness by Choice to round out the full capabilities needed to provide integrated life and health to achieve wellness.

"The companies that together create Nurtur share the common vision that the way to health is through life, and they way to wellness is through Nurtur," explained Jennifer Funaro, the company's director of marketing.

In its infancy, the company founders tooled a business plan based on one guiding question: "Why aren't we in better health?" They then committed themselves to "the fundamental belief that human performance—at work, at home or at play—is as much about managing life as it is about managing health.

"The single most important yet overlooked factor in a person's ability to maintain health, manage a chronic illness or improve health status," they maintain, "is that individual's life environment." And with its clear focus outlined, the company set out to "assist individuals to address the life issues that get in the way of health as well as the health issues that complicate living."

To that end, the company offers a broad array of integrated and stand-alone programs for work-life services, employee assistance (EAP), health, wellness, disease management and episodic/catastrophic care management that "help people clear away the barriers to health and productivity."

Some of the typical barriers overcome by Nurtur Health Coaches and work-life Consultants include empowering a retired 63 year old man to live with his Type-2 diabetes, encouraging a busy mom of two to manage chronic back pain, and helping to ease the stress of a young executive facing a job change and upcoming family move.

When asked to define how Nurtur stands apart from other healthcare providers, Ms. Funaro said that the company fills the void that's too often overlooked by traditional healthcare and disease management—the humanity of life. "Individuals are guided as much by feeling and emotion as by logic and reason," she commented. "People need to be supported with both clinical education and behavioral motivation to make and sustain changes to improve their health."

She went on to add that Nurtur will unveil a new perspective about this third dimension in healthcare later this month at the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) annual conference in San Diego, CA.

The company takes a "whole person" approach to member management. "Recognizing that people are human is the first step, and supporting them in building and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is the next," said Ms. Funaro. "The company's key point of difference is Nurtur PeopleCare, which is our guiding philosophy for how we work with members in our programs. It brings together the unique Nurtur multi-disciplinary health coaching model with real-life problem resolution to enable individuals to make long-term health a daily priority."

The company's disease management programs are NCQA and URAC accredited and follow evidenced-based guidelines and clinical best practices. Its novel approach to healthcare has garnered several awards, including the C. Everett Koop Award and the Alliance for Work-Life Progress Innovation Excellence Award.