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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES THAT MORE THAN 38,000 ELIGIBLE WORKERS AND SPOUSES SIGN UP FOR WELLNESS PROGRAM

Chicago's Numbers Near 80 Percent, Making Chicago Lives Healthy the Largest Wellness Program in the Country;

City Colleges of Chicago Union Agreement Will Grow Pool Even Further

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today that more than 38,000 city workers and eligible spouses have signed up for the City's wellness program, Chicago Lives Healthy, making the program the largest municipal wellness program in the United States and amounting to a staggering 79.2 percent acceptance rate.

"I am thrilled at the level of participation in our Wellness program and the interest on the part of Chicago's employees and their spouses in taking control of their own health and their futures," said Mayor Emanuel. "Our partnership with labor unions has been crucial to this effort, and will result in much more enjoyable and healthy lives for tens of thousands of city workers and their families. This would not have been possible without the support of our unions, and the city, its workers, and its taxpayers are going to benefit for years to come."

38,072 employees and spouses joined the program during the enrollment period, which began in late July and ended this week. Those members of the wellness program will next go on to participate in health screenings in September and part of October, as the official start of Chicago Lives Healthy. Members will be required to take an initial health screening to stay in the program; after that they will be asked to follow-up with health counselors and make a good-faith effort to take control over their own health and goals.



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"We are extremely pleased that City of Chicago employees and their dependents have so quickly embraced the Chicago Lives Healthy program," said Chris Cigarran, vice president of Healthways. "Participation rates have exceeded initial estimates by a significant margin, and we attribute this achievement to the Mayor's leadership, the cooperation of the city's unions, and the commitment of employees that recognize the value of the program and importance of creating a healthier Chicago."

The City's Wellness program was buoyed by strong partnership with the City's unions, both in creation and in generating interest. Union leadership was active in program design, crafting the various facets of Chicago's program, raising awareness among members, and encouraging sign-ups. The result is that Chicago is expected to see enormous health care savings, which will also grow over time.

The interest in the Wellness program continues to grow. Earlier this week, the City Colleges of Chicago announced a new contract with their professors, which will include the option for the teachers and their spouses to join the Wellness program over the course of the next year. This will serve to reduce health care costs across the City Colleges of Chicago and increase the overall savings for the City of Chicago.

Once employees have had their health screenings in September, the program will begin in earnest; employees will have phone calls with health counselors and be eligible for classes and focused health programming to help them meet their wellness goals. The program is free to everyone who signed up. Non-participants will make an increased employee health care contribution of \$50 a month, which will help pay for the program.

Employees and spouses who did not sign up for the program will have an opportunity to join the program during open enrollment periods for benefits in future years.

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