

BY CARLA CARWILE

# A Smart Solution

*How we're working with Boulder Valley schools to improve employee health*

**W**hen the economy slips, tax revenues slide. And the proof is as close as Colorado's public school budgets.

Fewer dollars are forcing hard choices in staffing, services and student programs. But in some instances—and Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) is a prime example—those budgetary constraints are also sparking fresh thinking on collaborative measures with community partners.

In 2010, BVSD began working with the providers in Boulder County—Avista Adventist Hospital, Boulder Medical Center, Longmont Clinic, Boulder Valley Individual Practice Association and Centura Health's integrated Physician Network (iPN)—on an aggressive health improvement/cost-reduction initiative.

## **BENEFITS ABOUND**

"Bob Jamieson, benefits director for Boulder Valley Schools, definitely deserves some applause on this," says Hans Wiik, iPN president and CEO. "It's a way that self-insured employers like the school district can 'move upstream' in saving healthcare costs while promoting wellness on a going-forward basis." With 2,000 employees and dependents covered, the projected budgetary impact is measured in hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The initial phase of the proactive measure targets the health needs of employees and dependents managing chronic conditions. The 200 to 300 people with diabetes, for example, will benefit from nutrition classes held close to their homes, discounts on



glucometers (and instruction in how to use them) from their Boulder Valley pharmacists and more.

"Our iPN member practices are in an excellent position to contribute to this initiative because of the electronic medical record system we already have in place," Wiik continues. "We already have the diabetic registry that will help this progress."

"This is a very exciting challenge for us because the people involved are very important people in our community," Wiik says. "They are the teachers of our children and the future of our country." **V&V**

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