

what's working

International Alliance of Theatrical
Stage Employees (IATSE)

When New York City's stage, studio and shop technicians need a go-between with the health care system, they know to call Katie for help.

Katie Fromm, health care coordinator/registered nurse for Local One of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) welfare fund, answers members' questions, does blood pressure checks and speaks on wellness topics at membership meetings, and contacts members with chronic health problems to help them avoid gaps in care.

"We plaster her picture all over our newsletters," said Scott Cool, director of fund administration for the local's welfare, pension and annuity funds. "We are doing everything possible to make sure she is firmly embedded in the culture of our local, so that participants will reach out to her when they need help navigating the health care system and so that they will take her call when she needs to engage them for some reason."

The fund began its wellness efforts in 2015 with construction of its wellness center—an examination room and waiting area at Local One midtown Manhattan union hall, close to the theaters and many TV studios where most of its members work. Members of the oldest entertainment union in the United States install, operate and maintain lighting and sound equipment as well as construct, install and maintain the scenery and special

effects for Broadway shows; concerts at Radio City Music Hall; Madison Square Garden and Carnegie Hall, productions at the Metropolitan Opera and throughout Lincoln Center; and broadcasts from CBS, NBC, ABC, FOX and PBS. They also work at cable TV studios and make possible the presentation of major corporate special events.

Fromm was hired in October 2015. After her first year on the job, "she is clearly much more successful engaging our participants than the phone calls put out by our insurance carrier's disease management and case management programs were," Cool said.

"Our wellness program's primary goal is to improve the health profile of our 2,500 participants through prevention and reductions in gaps in care," he said. "We also are striving to eliminate other types of waste by ensuring that our participants receive the right care at the right time and at the right place."

Hiring a health care coordinator/RN was a pilot project with Aetna and a Boston technology company called ACT.md. A disease management analysis by ACT.md has helped Fromm identify high-risk/high-cost participants as well as those with chronic conditions where there were gaps in care. ACT.md provided an online case management platform so Fromm could coordinate participants' care needs and monitor whether participants were following through with their care plans.

The National Wellness Institute and the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans have collaborated to share examples of wellness programs in the workplace.



Cool described Fromm as someone with highly developed social and clinical skills who reaches out to participants. She was hired to:

- Support participants' self-management of their health care and reinforce provider recommendations regarding prevention, screening and treatment.
- Consult with participants in person and by phone about medical issues and make recommendations and referrals as appropriate.
- Support the insurance company's existing disease and case management programs and help the insurance company engage individuals who didn't respond to the company's outreach efforts.

- Monitor hospital admissions, ask participants and/or family members if they need her help and, if requested, participate in patient care meetings locally or remotely.
- Monitor emergency room use and try to reduce members' ER visits, often by suggesting they consider whether an urgent care facility would be a more appropriate place to seek treatment.
- Coordinate with the employee assistance program when a participant's comprehensive care includes substance abuse or psychological issues.
- Act as a patient advocate to reduce or eliminate fragmentation, duplication and gaps in a participant's treatment plan and care.

"In 2015 we required that all participants and spouses have a wellness exam in order to qualify for a \$400 incentive, which they could receive starting in January 1, 2016," Cool said. "We had a large group of participants who hadn't seen a doctor in a long time—one participant went almost 30 years—and we wanted to make sure everyone knew about any lurking health conditions that should be treated."

The wellness screening, which the fund will require every other year in order to qualify for a wellness incentive, includes biometric screenings and may be followed up with health coaching.

In 2016, the fund expanded its wellness program to telehealth physician visits at a kiosk in the IATSE wellness center for a \$20 copay. The kiosk includes diagnostic tools, and Fromm can assist the physician

by taking a participant's temperature and doing blood pressure and blood oxygen checks during the telehealth visit. She can assist the telehealth physician by listening to participants' hearts and lungs with a stethoscope and checking skin conditions with a magnifying DermaCam.

Cool said he and Fromm have been impressed with the quality of care delivered through the telehealth kiosk, although usage hasn't been as high as they expected. To encourage more use of the wellness center during cold and flu season, visits to the telehealth kiosk were free to participants.

Fromm has been contacting participants with gaps in care or complex medical conditions, emphasizing those with cardiac conditions and diabetes for the first year. The fund offers participants with diabetes a targeted incentive of \$200 a year for completing all recommended visits and tests. Cool said that targeted incentives may be broadened to other conditions.

Fromm also educates participants about preventive screenings and coordinate wellness-related events at the union hall. She sometimes speaks at monthly membership meetings.

Other 2016 additions to the wellness program included meditation sessions, free breast cancer screenings and free flu vaccinations.

To receive the \$400 incentive in 2017, by the end of 2016 participants had to:

- Complete a health assessment questionnaire. Spouses, if covered by the fund, also had to complete the questionnaire.

- Have their blood pressure checked—by Fromm at either a membership meeting or the union's wellness center or as part of a physician visit.

Cool said it is too soon to tell whether there are significant cost savings from the wellness program, "but based on feedback from the membership and union trustees, even if it didn't save a nickel I think the program would continue because of the recognized value to our participants of having a nurse on site."