

CVS TO PENALIZE FOR NOT DISCLOSING WEIGHT METRICS



The Boston Herald reports CVS Caremark, one of the largest pharmacy chains in the United States, is requesting its workers to obtain measurements on their weight, height, blood pressure, and body fat and to turn over such metrics to an insurance provider.

CVS Caremark seems to be expanding more stores and more **workers**. In San Francisco, CA, people can see several CVS Caremark stores in almost every block on Market Street. With more workers, CVS Caremark must be interested in ways to decrease medical insurance costs. CVS Caremark informs workers who use its medical insurance plan to have a physician determine their health indicators, and to disclose the information to the company's benefits support staff.

Employees who do not participate in the voluntary wellness requirements will have to pay \$600 more annually than those who do participate. CVS pays for the wellness review.

Healthcare reform laws could make the practices of CVS Caremark common. Obamacare lets **employers** levy a higher penalty against employees who do not take part in wellness programs. In some situations, employees may have to pay more if they do not hit certain health targets such as proper body mass index.

Michael DeAngelis, a CVS spokesman, e-mailed a statement to The Huffington Post explaining the disclosures will be compliant with privacy laws, and the company will not access the health information. The health indicator figures of workers will be reviewed by the firm administering the company's benefits.

According to The Huffington Post, DeAngelis wrote in the email: "Our benefits program is evolving to help our colleagues engage more actively to improve their **health and manage health-associated costs**."

DeAngelis cited a survey from the National Business Group on Health that discovered almost 80 percent of employers offered a health assessment in 2011. Three-fourths of employers gave incentives for completing an assessment. The CVS Caremark plan appears to be similar to what other companies are doing to decrease health insurance costs, but goes a step further in requiring workers to disclose their wellness statistics to the company's benefits administration firm.

For instance, employees at Safeway in Pleasanton, CA have a similar program that requires them to undergo diabetes, blood pressure, and health screening, before getting discounts on medical insurance plans. During open enrollment for health insurance, Safeway has medical workers go on its Pleasanton, CA campus to take people's wellness indicators.

Companies may have to pay more for their workers' health insurance when President Obama's health care reform law goes into effect in 2014. Less **unhealthy employees** could equate to money savings for employers.