

'Money Talks' When it Comes to Losing Weight

Finding motivation to lose weight and reach a healthy body mass index (BMI) can be tough. But more employers are now jumping into the mix: Some take the route of penalties (higher insurance premiums for unhealthy weights), but others are using cash prizes as weight loss incentives.

A 2008 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* determined dieters were more almost five times more likely to meet their goals with a financial incentive.

One company facilitating financial incentives is HealthyWage, which offers money to employees and individuals for weight loss.

In HealthyWage's Team Weight Loss Challenge, \$10,000 is awarded to the team of five that loses the greatest percentage of weight in 12 weeks. Another is the BMI Challenge, which rewards participants that move from an obese BMI to a healthy one within a year.

The company says it is supported financially through corporate sponsorships, advertising, hospitals and health systems, food companies and municipal government clients. But participants can also invest in themselves, putting as much as \$300 of their own money into the program to win more. In the 10% Challenge, participants pay \$150 to sign up and win \$300 if they lose 10% of their body weight in six months.

Resource: HealthyWage at www.healthywage.com

