

# HEALTH

## Houston-Wide Weight-Loss Initiative Pits Dieters Against Each Other for Big Money

**B**ig bucks are at stake in a new Houston-wide wellness program for employers and individuals, alike. HealthyWage™, an online network that pays members who improve their health, continues to accept registrations for its “Houston Matchup” competition - a city-wide weight-loss contest that will reward top-performing individual teams with a total of \$18,000 in cash prizes, while the winning employer will receive thousands, commensurate with the number of companies participating. Registration is now open to all Houston residents and businesses, and the contest officially commences with weigh-ins to be held throughout Chicago on May 13, 2011.

“The Houston Matchup” brings the city together in a collective effort to achieve weight-loss and health goals through a fun and lucrative contest,” said HealthyWage co-founder David Roddenberry. “Competing in teams of 5 against family,

friends, and co-workers for added encouragement, bragging rights and big cash prizes, this initiative leverages our social network model proven to help motivate and sustain weight-loss.

Academic research shows that obesity has spread through social networks and will likely reverse through social networks. Houston resident and Chevron employee ‘Sharon,’ who recently won \$1,000 from HealthyWage for her 64 pound weight-loss accomplishment, is proof positive this approach works.

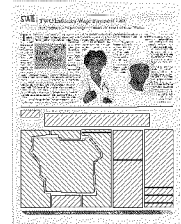
“With nearly one-quarter of all Texas adults reported to be obese and far more classified as overweight, coupled with Texas’s estimated annual medical cost of obesity ringing in at nearly \$5.5 billion, we hope this initiative will provide an extra dose of motivation to effect positive change for the region,” Roddenberry notes.

Throughout “The Houston Matchup” teams of 5 will compete for the greatest percent-

age of weight lost from May 13 through August 12, 2011. Each participant pays a \$60 registration fee and weighs in at the beginning and end of the contest at a local health club. The winning teams will receive a total of \$18,000 in cash prizes (\$10,000 for first place, \$5,000 for second, and \$3,000 for third). In addition, participants qualify for \$100 cash if they start with a Body Mass Index (BMI) above 30 and achieve a BMI below 25 after 1-year.

In addition to those participating at an individual level, large employers will also join in “The Houston Matchup” in a “Company vs. Company” or “School vs. School” division where they compete against other organizations throughout the state in an attempt to have their employees lose the most weight. Dozens of local companies are participating in the contest to pay the winning employer \$25,000, including Pride International, Wison Floating Systems, and Tesco Corporation.

“Participants in previous financial compensation-based HealthyWage team contests have lost on average 5% of their body weight,” Roddenberry concludes. “While our company pays all Houston residents \$100 to lose weight as a standard part of our program, we’ve found that the free \$100 cash incentive is more effective at motivating weight loss when coupled with



a contest to build excitement and peer support in working toward weight-loss goals.”

Those interested in learning more and registering for “The Houston Matchup” may do

so online at <http://www.healthy-wage.com/houston-matchup>.

