

## **Saving Money, Saving Lives**

### **Healthcare Solutions Center provides onsite health care to large employers**

By Molly Cerreta Smith

**Time and money are two things few people can afford to waste, especially these days. In an effort to save both, people often put their own health concerns on the backburner. After all, who wants to take time away from work or family to go to the doctor, wait around to actually see the doctor, and then get a diagnosis and a prescription that has to be filled for a hefty fee (not to mention the cost of the visit)?**

But Frances Ducar is changing the way health care is handled in the workplace and making it much more convenient for people to confront their health concerns. As founder and director of Healthcare Solutions Center, she strives to save Arizona employers and their employees money. And she's saving lives along the way.

Ducar spent more than 20 years in the health care industry in various positions, including first assistant to some of the country's top surgeons and as a family nurse practitioner.

"I've worked with some really amazing specialists, and a little piece of each of them is what makes me who I am today," she says of her mentors.

In her experiences over the years, she saw how companies were being "eaten alive" by insurance companies. She knew she wanted to find a way to help employers offer their employees quality health care and help employees afford the health care they deserve. With that, Healthcare Solutions Center was born in 2003.

Healthcare Solutions Center offers large companies (with 500 employees or more) an onsite health care clinic staffed by a family nurse practitioner. With HCS onsite clinics, employers save money on their overall health care costs. Employees save money because HCS eliminates co-pays and deductibles and reduces prescription costs to as little as \$4. Employees also receive confidential and top-notch care from a nurse practitioner. In addition, HCS has a relationship with a network of some of the state's finest specialists. If a patient needs further examination beyond what the nurse practitioner can provide, HCS can arrange a timely appointment with a specialist — sometimes even the same day.

"A company is only as healthy as its employees," says Ducar, adding that people are much more likely to visit an onsite clinic because it eliminates the need to take time off work to travel offsite to a doctor's office.

Employees don't just see the nurse practitioner if they are sick. HCS onsite clinics also offer wellness programs to help patients quit smoking and lose weight.

"Knowing you are helping everyone you see in one way or another, seeing a person change their

lifestyle, and seeing companies save money and put it back into their wellness plans — these are just a few of the immense rewards of this business,” Ducar says.

She feels good knowing that employers are saving millions on their health care costs and that HCS is helping employees appropriately utilize every avenue and benefit of the company’s wellness plan, including counseling and beyond.

But there are challenges as well. Ducar personally selects her family nurse practitioners, and she admits that placing the right nurse practitioner with the right company is one of the hardest and most important, parts of her business.

“My nurse practitioners are a reflection of me,” she says. “They become the advocate for their patients who just don’t know where to go.”

Ducar must have a knack for placing her nurse practitioners because she says she’s never had a dissatisfied patient.

“The patients trust (the nurse practitioners), and they are all happy to have us there,” she says.

The entrepreneur predicts huge growth for the future of her company, but she says her business will remain in the state for the long haul.

“Love of medicine and the desire to help Arizona companies afford their health care is what drove me to start this company,” Ducar explains.

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