



## Cisco Systems Inc. Employee Health Outreach Program

Cisco Systems, Inc. has embarked on an innovative health outreach program for employees who may be experiencing periods of stress and anxiety in their lives. Cisco administers a voluntary health assessment survey to employees annually via the web. In the fall of 2006 Cisco teamed with United Behavioral Health (UBH) and Harvard Medical School (HMS) to develop an outreach program and to evaluate whether it works better than the standard behavioral health services currently offered to Cisco employees by UBH. The goal of this program is to find ways to provide more effective and comprehensive health-related services to Cisco employees.

Employees who scored high on specific health assessment questions are assigned randomly to either the new outreach program or the standard UBH services. The outreach program involves a care manager calling the employee. In the phone conversation, the care manager assesses the employee's level of anxiety or stress, and, as appropriate, encourages the employee to seek professional services from a counselor, social worker, psychiatrist or other clinician, as well as providing education and self-help tools to reduce levels of stress, anxiety or depression. The care manager maintains contact with these employees through regular phone calls to inquire if the employee sought the professional services and is following the recommendations of the professional. The employees assigned to the standard UBH services receive a letter informing them that their answers to the health assessment may indicate that professional services may be useful, and provides a toll free number that the employee can call to discuss such services with the UBH care manager.

There is also an evaluation research component of this program led by Harvard Medical School. The evaluation will determine whether the care manager outreach intervention is more effective than standard UBH care, as measured by changes in symptoms and utilization of services, based on data that the employees have agreed to share with the evaluation team. Both groups of employees -- those assigned to the outreach program and those assigned to the standard UBH services -- are informed that they can decline to be in the evaluation component.

For employees who agree to be in the evaluation part of this program, all the data that are collected about them are kept confidential. The Harvard researchers do not receive employee names or other information that would identify who they are. Results will be presented only in aggregated form to avoid any indirect identification based on personal characteristics. In addition, employees can decide to drop out of the evaluation component at any time. Finally, the Harvard Medical School Committee on Human Studies and the New England Institutional Review Board have approved the procedures used in this study to ensure that the evaluation is conducted in an ethical manner and that the confidentiality of Cisco employees is protected. For further information on either the health outreach or the evaluation study please contact Rebecca Cate at UBH ([rebecca\\_a\\_cate@uhc.com](mailto:rebecca_a_cate@uhc.com)) or Elaine Veracruz at HMS ([veracruz@hcp.med.harvard.edu](mailto:veracruz@hcp.med.harvard.edu)).