



Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Partnership with Bunker Hill Community College

To address shortages in key positions, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), a CareGroup member, has developed programs to train current employees for these roles. To date, pipeline programs focused on ten different occupations have been launched, helping over 100 workers move into new jobs and increase their lifetime earnings potential.

In the process of offering college-level training opportunities for employees, it became clear that many BIDMC employees were not quite ready to pursue college-level work. In 2007, in partnership with Bunker Hill Community College, BIDMC launched its Employee Career Initiative (ECI), which offers employees:

- free pre-college courses in reading, math and English on-site at BIDMC;
- free college-level science courses that are key pre-requisites for allied health careers;
- one-on-one college and career counseling; and
- free tutoring from volunteer BIDMC employees.

BIDMC designed this program to help more employees acquire the basic skills they need to grow their careers and fill important roles within the institution. The program has also greatly increased the number of employees eligible for BIDMC internal pipeline programs.

With almost 10 years of experience running the ECI, BIDMC has learned that the following are essential for a successful partnership:

- Because this program is employer-led, BIDMC was able to work with the college to design the program and make course corrections in a manner that would best serve BIDMC employees.
- The college placement test can be a significant barrier to adult learners looking to attain a college degree or credential. Offering a convenient, no-cost opportunity to take pre-college courses removes that barrier for BIDMC employees.
- Many employees take an ECI course after applying for a pipeline program and learning that their skills are not where they need to be for a promotional opportunity. By more directly connecting skill development to promotional opportunities, we have been successful in attracting employees to these courses.
- BIDMC closely monitors student performance by offering intrusive advising—checking in with employees when attendance or grades slip, and offering support. This is why employees' pass rates are so high.
- BIDMC is a large institution. Having a person who any employee can go to for career and academic support is great for employee retention, development and engagement.
- Innovative ideas sometimes need seed money to start. A grant from The Boston Foundation got this program off the ground, and sustained it for nine years

BIDMC has, to date, more than 1,100 employees have participated in this program with an impressive course pass rate of 90 percent. This program has been an excellent way to support BIDMC's employees in taking the first step toward a college degree, a certificate program, or one of BIDMC's internal promotional opportunities. The ECI has become the gateway to all of the career development services available to BIDMC employees.

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