Creation of the HERO Database

HERO facilitated the creation of a large, retrospective, multi-employer health promotion research database. This was accomplished by collaboration among HERO, the StayWell Company, the MEDSTAT Group, and six large employers: Chevron Corporation, Health Trust, Inc., Hoffmann La Roche, Marriott Corporation and the states of Michigan and Tennessee. All employers were clients of The StayWell Company and The MEDSTAT Group. A top priority in the creation of the HERO database was the ability to examine the impact of risk factors, risk factor combinations and risk factor change on individual medical expenditures.

The HERO health promotion research database includes 47,500 employees, all of whom completed a common health risk appraisal (HRA), administered by StayWell during the study period of 1990 to 1996. Approximately 12,000 employees completed two or more HRAs during this time. The HERO database was created by connecting the HRA data set with the medical claims data set from the MEDSTAT Group along with the eligibility data set. The confidentiality of individuals was maintained by scrambling personal identifiers across all data sources. The merging of these data sets yielded 113,963 person years' experience. The previous largest research database of this kind is the Control Data - Milliman Robertson database which includes about 13,000 study subjects and provides approximately 40,000 person years' experience.

Creation of the HERO database had a major impact on the future of health promotion and disease management research, as it was used to support research studies that examine the association or impact of single risk factors, risk factor combinations, risk factor change, selected chronic diseases and demographics on: medical costs, diagnosis, treatments, procedures, outcomes, hospitalization or any other parameter usually recorded in a typical fee-for-service medical claims database.

A consortium of 20 HERO sustaining partners funded the creation of the database. HERO is willing to facilitate research, using the database, for outside clients.