

CREATING BROADER SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTH PLANS

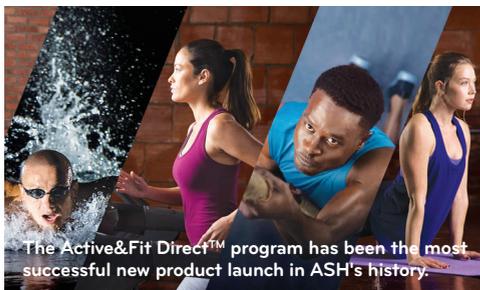
Leveraging innovation to find solutions to health challenges

Thirty-two years ago, entrepreneur George DeVries co-founded a California-based chiropractic network, earning a modest \$35,000 in revenue its first year. Today that business, American Specialty Health Incorporated (ASH), has morphed into a leading nationwide health services organization offering more than a dozen health management, fitness, and musculoskeletal health programs, posting \$510 million in revenue. A key secret to its growth? Listening to what its health plan and employer group customers said they needed for their members.

Consistently, ASH has supported non-pharmaceutical-based pain management tools, which initially included access to chiropractic, but expanded to physical and occupational therapy, acupuncture, massage therapy, podiatry, and other services. Today, what ASH now calls its “pain management ecosystem” includes cognitive behavioral coaching, virtual physical therapy, self-help videos, fitness programs, and more, delivered via web platforms and a mobile app, to help solve one of the nation’s biggest health care challenges: musculoskeletal pain management.

FILLING THE GAPS IN THE HEALTH BENEFITS MARKETPLACE

“Four or five years ago, we saw a gap in the fitness market, leading us to explore a new fitness concept with a great value proposition,” says DeVries, chairman and CEO of ASH. “The idea was to offer our clients’ members a self-pay program providing access to any of the 10,000+ fitness centers in ASH’s fitness club



network for only \$25 per month and flexibility to change fitness centers at any time with no long-term contract.”

“We couldn’t be more pleased with how successful it has been,” DeVries says. “To date, ASH’s Active&Fit Direct™ program has been the most successful new product launch in the company’s history.” In fact, more than 140 of the Fortune 500 offer Active&Fit Direct to their employees, on top of more than 50 health plans, including national and regional plans. It is now the nation’s largest commercial fitness program in terms of eligible membership.

That kind of innovation is what led ASH to another lofty milestone: being named 10 of the last 11 years to the Inc. 5000 list of the nation’s fastest-growing privately held companies. Just 3/10 of one percent of Inc. 5000 companies hit that milestone 10 times or more, as ASH has done.

“Today, ASH products touch 50 million people, or one out of every five Americans,” says DeVries. “ASH works with more than 140 health plans nationally. One hundred percent of our revenue, membership, and products have been developed organically.”

Delivering innovative programs that serve client needs has been one of the company’s primary growth drivers, supported by technology that fosters more efficient administration. For example, leveraging technology, ASH has made it possible for 85 percent of all provider transactions, such as claims and billing, to happen online.

PEOPLE ARE THE CORNERSTONE OF ASH’S CULTURE AND SUCCESS

Ultimately, ASH’s success is due to its people and company culture. “Building a great company starts first and foremost with recruiting and retaining great people,” DeVries says. “Fit is absolutely critical, as is having a top-notch training process at every level in the company and a great culture of innovation.”