

Inc. 5000 HONOR ROLL

Building on a Legacy of Innovation

American Specialty Health embodies what it takes to rank on the Inc. 5000, again and again: leadership, innovation, and perseverance

The same strengths that powered 35 years of growth for American Specialty Health Incorporated (ASH) enabled it to turn the Covid-19 crisis into a time of positive change. “Every year we’ve been in business, it’s been about taking the next step forward—innovating by being entrepreneurial, creating new capabilities, and improving what we have. There’s never been a year where we’ve said, okay, we’re going to just stand still,” says Chairman and CEO George DeVries.

DeVries co-founded ASH from the second bedroom of his condo in 1987 with \$5,000. Today, ASH provides tech-enabled benefit management services, including musculoskeletal health provider networks and programs, fitness center networks and exercise programs, and health management solutions to health plans, insurance carriers, employers, and others. The journey from startup to \$600 million business, with 10 Inc. 5000 honors, was paved with challenges and triumphs. While nothing can prepare you for a global pandemic, the privately-owned specialty health services organization has kept its innovation streak going with a strong culture and enlightened leadership. It also has maintained its long-held belief that it can and will solve tough problems, DeVries says.



George DeVries, chairman and CEO, American Specialty Health

10x

ON THE INC. 5000 LIST



35
Years in Business

1400%
Increase in on-demand fitness video consumption 2019-2021

800%
Increase in requests for at-home fitness kits 2019-2021

1500+
Employees

\$600+
Million Annual Revenue

EMPLOYEES AND PARTNERS FIRST AND FOREMOST

While some early predictions indicated that Covid would last just a few weeks, ASH leadership had evidence it could persist 18 months to two years. The team began “planning for the long haul,” designating employee health and safety as the top priority. Within about a month, ASH transitioned 96 percent of its workforce—many of whom had been in the office full-time—to remote work. To keep employees informed, ASH emphasized frequent, transparent communication, relying on its CEO, chief health services officer, and other executives for regular all-staff updates.

Additionally, ASH showed a commitment to its partners and customers during Covid, including voluntary monthly payments to its fitness center network partners totaling nearly \$10 million, helping fitness centers reopen when restrictions permitted. “They’re partners in the best of times. We felt like they should be our partners, too, when things are more difficult,” DeVries says. Home fitness kits were also offered to fitness program members, and home workouts were streamed free via social media, to help people stay fit during gym closures.

FORESEEING LASTING SHIFTS

As part of its mission to help people live healthier lives, ASH expanded its on-demand fitness offerings from a few hundred videos to more than 5,500. When ASH realized most virtual workout programs overlooked one of its largest markets—older adults—it partnered with a fitness expert to create content specifically for that audience. DeVries believes the at-home fitness boom will continue long after the pandemic. According to a McKinsey study, 60 percent of Americans who exercise regularly plan to mix at-home workouts with trips to the studio or gym moving forward.¹

With ASH’s many advancements, the company continues to weather Covid-19 and is strongly positioned for the future. With new products and policies, but the same resilience and optimism, ASH is ready to emerge from these past two years stronger than ever and poised for its next phase of robust growth.

ASHCOMPANIES.COM

¹ “Sweating for the Fitness Consumer,” McKinsey & Company, June 21, 2021

American Specialty Health now produces free virtual workout classes available to everyone on YouTube and Facebook

