



Workplace Wellness Programs:

PROMOTING BETTER HEALTH WHILE CONTROLLING COSTS

MESSAGE:

Your employees are your most valuable assets.

MISSION:

Foster a healthy workplace environment in order to boost employee morale while improving productivity.



LABOR, IMMIGRATION &
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS DIVISION
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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HOW TO SET UP WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Step No. 1: PRELIMINARY PLANNING

- Do you have the necessary financial commitment to start a comprehensive wellness program, or would you prefer to test a small-scale program, gradually expanding it over time?
- What are the defined objectives of your wellness program?
- Can these objectives be conveyed clearly and succinctly?
- Have you polled your employees to determine what elements they may be interested in (e.g. health interest survey)?
- Who will take the lead in setting up elements of the program, and report directly to senior-level management?
- Do you have top down/bottom up support from all levels of management?
- Are senior-level managers engaged with all aspects of the program, and willing to participate?
- What financial and nonfinancial incentives are available to spur participation (e.g., extra vacation days, premium variation, prizes)?
- Are you working with health care vendors to set up Health Risk Assessments (HRAs)?
- Do you have a written plan in place with a specific timeframe for accomplishing your designated goals?

Step No. 2: CREATE A COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

- Is information accessible to employees about ongoing activities (e.g., employee newsletter, intranet, Twitter, Facebook)?
- Do you have buy-in from an initial select group of employees whom individuals trust, and who serve as advocates for the program?
- Is there recognized marketing associated with the program, such as a brand or logo?
- Are you sending out notices in a variety of formats (e.g. newsletter, website) to reach the largest audience and in a timely manner, (e.g. immediately one to two weeks prior to the announcement of a programmatic element, rather than months in advance)?
- Have you developed an annual communication strategy?
- Have you leveraged your health plan vendors and community resources for posters, brochures, and other communication materials?

Step No. 3: EVALUATE THE WORKPLACE SETTING

- Do you have walking areas that are easy to navigate?
- Do you have workplace wellness policies in place (e.g., a policy that bans smoking on premises)?
- Do you provide biometric screenings (e.g., blood pressure, cholesterol, etc.)?
- Do you provide an Employee Assistance Program, such as telephonic/Web-based coaching, to reduce stress?
- Have you taken an inventory of all wellness programs, wellness policies, and healthy environmental supports?



Step No. 4: PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKPLACE WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

- Set up after-hour clubs and publicize contests between groups (e.g., fitness clubs, walking clubs, running clubs, hiking clubs, softball team, basketball team).
- Subsidize gym/fitness membership.
- Provide a point system for premium discounts for employees who wish to pursue initiatives on their own.
- Implement a pedometer walking challenge.
- Offer employees access to dietitians.
- Serve healthy food in vending machines/cafeterias.
- Facilitate yoga classes.
- Host health fairs.
- Provide immunization screenings.
- Host seminars on healthy lifestyle choices.
- Desktop exercises (e.g., jump squats, hamstring curl, side lunge, and knee lift).
- Smoking cessation.

Step No. 5: WORK WITH YOUR HEALTH PLAN

- Can your health insurance broker or health plan directly incorporate wellness programs into the plan's design? If not, can you hire a vendor?
- If you hire a vendor, will you have the ability to purchase additional wellness services? Do you also have the ability to buy additional products from your health plan (e.g. metric scorecards)?
- Do you offer your employees a reduction in their premiums when they complete a Health Risk Assessment administered by the health plan?

Step No.6: ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

- Partner with community organizations, such as local hospitals and non-profits, to leverage health and wellness resources.
- Create regional cooperatives (e.g., local businesses teaming up with other businesses in the surrounding areas to create joint competitions, such as a local running competition).
- Publicize local farmers' markets.

Step No. 7: EVALUATE THE PROCESS & IMPACT

- Are employees aware of all the available program elements?
- Do you provide various opportunities throughout the year for feedback on programs (e.g., through surveys, focus groups)?
- Are you willing to set up an informal group (e.g. advisory group) to permit employees to provide input and suggestions?
- Do you have results, both short term and long term, regarding the impact of your wellness program (e.g., these results may include financial savings, but also be less tangible such as improved employee morale)?
- Have you obtained any of the objectives initially sought? If not, what design changes can be made to obtain desired results?
- Are employees more productive at work?
- Is your initial financial commitment adequate?
- Are individuals that actively participate in the program being recognized for their achievements?

Step No. 8: REDEFINE PARAMETERS OF THE PROGRAM

- If modifications are necessary, will there be resistance to proposed changes? Can these outstanding issues be resolved?
- Can changes to the program be justified in terms of the bottom line and be clearly articulated to employees?
- Do you provide opportunities for your employees to actively participate in program redesign by offering options and allowing them to recommend changes?