



## Worksite Wellness Program – Six Secrets to Success

More than ever before, employers today are embracing worksite wellness programs as mounting evidence proves that such initiatives can increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, boost morale and lower health-related costs. Business leaders are looking for ways to run leaner businesses - literally and figuratively. They may be cutting costs in some areas, but they also recognize that offering health-management initiatives to their workers ultimately saves dollars and makes good sense. That's especially true if they know the six secrets to success.

### 1. **Partner with the local hospital.**

While companies of all types (including health plans) offer wellness programs, only hospitals are truly at the center of health and well-being in almost every community. Most hospitals have made significant investments in their community and are committed to staying - thus providing the consistency required to track the effectiveness of a health initiative over time.

### 2. **Gather data.**

Encourage employees to complete questionnaires regarding health plan participation, family history, physician relationships, lifestyle and selected health metrics, such as blood pressure and glucose readings. This information must be kept confidential to protect employees' privacy, but is essential to share with the individual employee in helping them manage potential health risks. Without this information it is tough to know where to begin.

### 3. **Assess the cost of doing nothing.**

Based on the identified health risks of a workforce, employers can determine what their health-related costs would be if those risks go unmitigated. Health-related costs can include health benefits, absenteeism or lost productivity due to illness or injury, and workers' compensation claims.

### 4. **Educate.**

Many people want to improve their health or break bad habits, but don't know how to do it or where to start. Worksites are ideal for distributing or posting health-related messages, offering lunchtime presenters on various health topics, or hosting support groups or health workshops. And, at a time when many employers are forced to freeze or eliminate some benefits, this is something of high value that you can offer at a low cost.

### 5. **Encourage.**

Reward employees' efforts and accomplishments. Incentives contribute to the overall success of workplace wellness programs and add an extra spirit that makes the programs fun. These rewards can include discounted health premiums, gift cards, financial rewards or extra paid time off. Remember, these are relatively small expenses when compared to the potential cost savings of having a healthier workforce.

6. **Measure the results.**

Track the health improvements among workers through periodic screenings for such conditions as high blood pressure or cholesterol. Calculate the company's health-related costs over time. Survey employees to find out if they feel better about themselves, their health and their jobs.

We have known for years that chronic conditions, such as obesity, smoking, diabetes and high blood pressure are extremely costly to America's businesses. The time has come for all employers to take an active role in reducing these conditions and their associated costs.

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