



FOR EMPLOYERS

Worksite Wellness Guide

Keys to a successful wellness program

Congratulations on starting your journey toward a healthy workplace comprised of healthy, productive employees. This guide is expressly designed to help you implement a successful wellness program and sustain it long-term. We will discuss the strategies to employ in developing, delivering and achieving success with workplace wellness.

Here are the top eight strategies to implementing a successful wellness program

1. Visible CEO/Senior Leadership support
2. Select a Wellness Leader
3. Offer an annual health assessment
4. Promote health and wellness programs
5. Create a culture of wellness
6. Support health and wellness programs throughout the year
7. Execute an effective communications campaign
8. Reward participation with a valuable incentive

1. Visible CEO/Senior Leadership support

In order for your employees to take your wellness efforts seriously, it is imperative that the message come straight from the top — that is, from the leaders in your organization. Throughout the wellness program, it is critical that senior leaders not only talk about the importance of wellness, but they serve as role models to all employees. In so doing, senior leaders should visibly participate in the lifestyle management programs you offer.

2. Select a Wellness Leader

In a small business, it may be difficult to hire a full-time or a part-time person to fill the role of a wellness leader. That is fine, as you may already have someone on staff to fulfill the responsibilities of this role. This person may be on your Human Resources staff, an administrative assistant or just a very passionate employee. Whomever you select, it is extremely important to have the role of a wellness leader incorporated into his or her job description, not merely an added task to the current workload. As a wellness leader, this person becomes responsible for the outcomes of the wellness program. When one person is responsible for its growth — as detailed in the job description — the wellness program takes precedence along with other responsibilities.

It is also important that a wellness committee support the wellness leader. The wellness leader can chair a group of individuals to work as advisors of the wellness program. The leader will ask the wellness committee to provide input and assign tasks when implementing lifestyle management programs. This helps distribute the workload.

Once you select a wellness leader and form a wellness committee, one of the first tasks of the committee could be to survey employees about the types of health and wellness programs in which they would participate. This will help the committee get a sense on where to start with offering wellness programs that interest employees and would drive participation.

3. Offer an annual health assessment

An annual health assessment creates a teachable moment for employees. They learn about their current health status, what they are doing well and improvements they can make to reach their full health potential. Armed with that understanding and the opportunity to improve, the next step is to begin making lifestyle changes to benefit their overall health and well-being.

The HealthPartners® Smart Steps program health assessment provides individuals the ability to monitor their progress over time resulting from the changes and improvements in health status year-to-year. This allows visibility to discover whether their health is moving in a positive or negative direction.

As the employer, you have the opportunity to receive a snapshot of your population's health status through the Smart Steps Wellness Profile report. Of those who complete the Smart Steps health assessment, the report breaks down how many employees are at low risk or high risk for developing heart disease or diabetes as well as how many currently have active disease. In addition to the risk breakdown, the report also provides information on what your population's key risk factors are, such as low physical activity, being overweight or tobacco use. Use this report to assist in the annual planning of your wellness program.

4. Provide the opportunity to enroll in a health and wellness program

After employees take the health assessment, it is important to provide them an immediate opportunity to begin taking action on improving their health status. Be sure to communicate to employees what programs are available consistently throughout the year.

The Smart Steps online wellness programs are designed to help participants make lifestyle changes that can help lower weight, increase physical activity, improve diet quality, manage stress, lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and improve overall quality of life.

- **HealthPartners® 10,000 Steps® program:** Employees walk their way to better health and make daily activity a routine part of a healthier life. In no time flat, participants discover more energy, less stress, sounder sleep and feel great overall. Logging on weekly, participants track their steps and other activities, like biking or swimming using a tracker and step conversion calculator. Plus, they will benefit from healthy recipes and tips on healthy eating and fun activities. They have a choice of two editions: *Lose Weight* or *Feel Great*.
- **HealthPartners® Stress eProgram:** Employees identify their personal stressors, learn coping skills and how to manage stress for healthy and balanced living. Features include interactive tutorials with tips to manage time, a private journal, relaxation techniques, recipes and motivational reminders. Participants benefit from simple, practical stress-relieving tips and techniques.
- **HealthPartners® Weight eProgram:** Employees learn to adapt healthy lifestyle behaviors to lose weight and keep it off. Features include motivational emails, a calorie calculator, recipes and trackers help participants identify their habits by tracking activity, weight and what they eat. Consistent tracking is one of the most effective strategies to help individuals make permanent lifestyle changes.

5. Create a culture of health

Creating an environment that is supportive of healthy behaviors and wellness activities is vital to the success of your program. Here are a few bona fide ways for your organization to foster a culture of health.

Encourage all managers to be supportive of healthy behaviors at work. It is vitally important that all leaders are on board and supportive of wellness behaviors. Employees need to know that participation in wellness programs and living a healthy lifestyle at work is encouraged. For example, managers should support participation in wellness programs, urge employees to use their lunch hour rather than work through it, and encourage employees to use their break time for walking and other stress-relieving activities.

Create an environment supportive of wellness goals. Look around your work environment. Is it supportive of a healthy lifestyle? Do you offer healthy food choices? Are employees aware of a safe place to walk at or near the workplace? Are co-workers supportive of one another? Bottom line: It is extremely important that employees who want to make healthy choices have the option to do so.

Implement health-promoting policies. By incorporating basic health policies into your business operations, your company can further demonstrate its commitment to wellness and healthy employees. Consider implementing four basic policies at work: tobacco-free work environment, alcohol/drug-free environment, seatbelt use adherence and an emergency procedure plan in the event of a disaster.

6. Offer health and wellness activities throughout the year

Consistency is key. It is very important to keep your wellness program visible throughout the year, not just for one event or campaign. Here are some ideas of how you can supplement the HealthPartners® Smart Steps program with other health and wellness programs.

Health screening event: A health screening is an opportunity for your employees to learn even more about their current health status. Learning their “numbers” along with completing the health assessment provides employees with a full picture of their personal health status. Health screening tests can include — but are not limited to — cholesterol, blood pressure, glucose and BMI (Body Mass Index).

Lunch and Learns: Lunch and learn seminars are a great way to provide your employees with health information in a fun, interactive way. Your company can host lunch and learn seminars on any topic of interest to your employees. Use your aggregate health assessment results to understand what topics would be most beneficial to your employees. Also, allow employees to make suggestions on what they would like to learn more about, maybe it is a session on healthy cooking or managing stress.

Health awareness campaigns: A fun way to help employees begin making lifestyle changes is to offer a health awareness campaign. Campaigns can be six- to eight-week programs focusing on a particular health-related topic. The goal is to increase employee knowledge of the topic and assist in facilitating individual behavior change. The campaign’s design helps employees make positive changes and encourages all employees to live a healthier lifestyle. Health awareness campaigns can include topical education as well as a weekly activity event. The activity event encourages participants to incorporate what they have learned into their daily routine. Topic areas could include weight management, nutrition, physical activity and stress management.

Quarterly health newsletter: Providing consistent health information educates employees on how to live a healthy lifestyle. Consider offering a newsletter that addresses a variety of topics, including physical activity, weight management, stress management and tobacco cessation. It is important to provide up-to-date and timely health information on the topic. You can also use the newsletter to announce upcoming wellness programs. Encourage employee participation and highlight the personal health and wellness benefits.

7. Execute an effective communications campaign

It is extremely important to execute a well-planned communications strategy to help build employee awareness of your wellness program. You can offer a great wellness program, yet if people are unaware of it, they will not participate.

With the HealthPartners® Smart Steps program, we make promoting it easy for you by providing an entire communications toolkit. Communications materials include:

- A leadership e-mail/letter and a series of engagement e-mails
- Overview flyer
- Health assessment flyer
- Series of promotional posters
- Series of wellness articles
- Employee FAQ

Review the Smart Steps communications toolkit and plan your strategy on when and how you will communicate with your employees. Use the communications vehicles that are ideally suited to your population, most effective in your workplace and will have the greatest impact on your employees. For example, if your employees are online, e-mail communications are a very effective way to communicate the wellness program.

Communications timeline:

When offering the annual Smart Steps health assessment, we suggest you run a strong communications campaign for two to three weeks. A strong communication strategy consists of delivering multiple communications to your employees at **least twice a week. Consistency is key!** During the two- to three-week campaign, promote the health assessment using the Smart Steps toolkit communications materials. Since employees tend to be deadline driven, adding a completion date for the health assessment is very effective in driving participation. After your two- to three-week

health assessment campaign, we encourage you to continue promoting the availability of Smart Steps throughout the year so that employees know it is still available.

Once you complete the health assessment campaign, begin promoting enrollment in a wellness program. Similar to the health assessment campaign, we suggest you do a two- to three-week campaign to promote enrollment in a wellness program. This should also consist of multiple employee communications each week for two to three weeks. Once you complete your campaign on wellness program enrollment, continue promoting the availability of these programs at least once a month. Consistency is key and critical to your success.

8. Reward participation with a valuable incentive

Another highly effective way to drive participation into the wellness program is to offer an incentive. It is critical to your success that the incentive you offer is of value to your employees. The more your employees want to earn the incentive, the higher your participation rate will be. Incentives could include casual “attire” days, gift cards or paid time off. Typically, the higher the monetary value, the higher the participation rate.

Smart Steps makes it easy to offer an incentive. You can track who completes the health assessment and one program by asking employees to print off the Smart Steps Certificate of Completion. These dynamic certificates automatically populate with employee name and date of completion. These certificates are available once both the health assessment and wellness program are complete so that you can reward your employees after each individual step or once they finish both steps.

Ensuring Wellness Program Success

The keys to implementing a successful wellness program in your workplace lie in the execution and adherence to the top eight strategies presented here. Successful outcomes will transform your employee population into a healthy, happy and more productive one.

Create a culture of wellness in your workplace today... one individual at a time.