

# What Is Employee Wellness?

*What comes to mind when you hear 'employee wellness'? Employer subsidized weight loss programs? Exercise classes? Employee health evaluations? What's behind employee wellness and how does it achieve its objective?*

Employee wellness is built on the premise that healthy employees have a positive impact on the bottom line in many ways. 'Healthy employees' leads to 'Happy employees' and often translates to 'Engaged and Productive' employees - which is good for business.

The intent of most employee wellness programs is threefold:

- **Improve employees health.**
- **Reduce health risks in employee populations.**
- **Reduce employee healthcare costs.**

Employee wellness specifically addresses common health risks that exist within any given workforce such as stress, obesity, smoking and high blood pressure. It's already been proven that these risks lead to major health challenges for individual employees and put a financial strain on the employer subsidizing the health plan covering the affected individuals. Adopting an employee wellness program is a proactive way to address these issues and ensure employees have the support they need to correct and adjust behaviors that typically play a role in creating these risks to begin with.



*Leveraging in-depth knowledge of healthcare compliance issues and industry trends, your TPA can provide customized reports and guidance to develop and support your wellness initiatives.*



Trends



PBM reports



Monthly Audits

Third Party Administrator



Employer

## Wellness Programs

- Smoking Cessation
- Weight Loss
- Stress Management
- Counseling
- Nutrition Options
- Volunteering Opportunities

Successful employee wellness initiatives are not stand alone programs – they are integrated within the company’s culture. To change employee health habits, you need to start with your company’s culture – setting everyone up for a healthy tomorrow.

## There are several elements that an employer can leverage to help ensure employee acceptance of and participation in the company’s wellness initiatives. Below we have outlined three of the most impactful.



### Simple, Transparent Objectives

Clear and frequent communication that shares program objectives helps employees understand the ‘why’ behind the program. It is important that employees know how it will work, how they can become involved and the benefits to them (emotional, physical, and financial) as well as the organization. Transparent objectives can also help build trust and motivation with employees.



### Communication

Successful wellness programs actively include the employees in the design of the program. They leverage multiple communication channels like focus groups, ongoing feedback, and employees co-leading the program to help ensure ‘ownership’ and ‘sustainable engagement’.



### Create a Supportive Environment

Leaders should not underestimate the power of peer, coworker and family influence and support. The opportunity to include spouses and family members in wellness programs has been shown to increase participation and engagement. Programs should also provide employees the opportunity to personalize wellness goals that are applicable and achievable for their individual needs and generational differences. Programs targeting a ‘one-size-fits-all’ specific health goal have been shown to be less successful than those programs offering individual personalization.

## Frequently Asked Questions



What can I do as the employer to encourage active participation in our wellness program?



Very simple and low cost – participate in the program yourself. Share your reasons for participating, encourage others to participate, and celebrate results regularly. This will send a powerful message to your employees that shows you care about their well-being!



What could be a simple, fun way to engage my employees to be more active in the workplace?



If your workplace has multiple floors, make the stairwells fun to be in. Encourage employees to decorate the walls with fun, lively graphics making the stairway an enticing alternative to the elevator. For more ideas, search “employee wellness ideas” online.