



Simple Wellness Solutions

*Need support creating
a wellness program
at your work?*

*Get in touch with us at
416.456.18.57*

*info@proactivemovement.com
www.proactivemovement.com*

The Huffington Post

Wellness In The Workplace: Bringing Preventive Care Into The Office

By: Emma Gray (September 11th, 2006)

Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/06/09/wellness-in-workplace_n_873169.html#s289130&title=Stress_Management

“Work” and “wellness” are not often used in the same sentence.

For many Americans, preventive health care is completely disconnected from their daily work routines. However, over the past few years, the connection between the work environment, employee health and employee productivity has been examined with increasing scrutiny.

At this point it is common knowledge that American health outcomes are not in good shape. In a nation where, according to the CDC, more than 75 percent of health care spending is related to chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, obesity and respiratory conditions -- many of which are preventable -- it has become imperative to examine the entirety of the American lifestyle. Since most American adults are employed at least part-time, the workplace inevitably plays a large role in Americans' health.

A study published in May pointed to a correlation between an increasingly sedentary workforce and an increasingly obese population. While approximately 50 percent of private sector jobs required at least a moderate amount of physical activity in 1960, fewer than 20 percent of private sector jobs do the same today. In addition to a lack of physical exercise, the CDC points to poor nutrition and poor lifestyle choices -- such as binge drinking and cigarette smoking -- as the major causes of these chronic conditions. It's obvious that poor lifestyle choices have adverse effects on Americans as individuals. What is less obvious, but equally as important, is the adverse effects that poor health outcomes have on employers.

Not only do chronically sick employees become extremely costly for employers due to health insurance coverage and medical expenses (a Towers Watson survey reported that employer health care costs have increased 36 percent over the past five years), but chronically ill employees also tend to be less productive and -- predictably -- absent more often. This translates into employers having a very real stake in their employees' health. And companies are starting to take notice. One way that employers are addressing these issues is through the implementation of workplace wellness programs.

An array of programs have emerged over the past few years -- often incentive-based -- encouraging employees to make positive lifestyle decisions and hit certain health goals to reap rewards, many of which are financial. Chris Boyce, CEO of Virgin HealthMiles -- a private wellness program that companies can use in conjunction to health insurance -- says that the crux of his company is that “We pay people to be active ... Think of it like the ‘good driver discount’ where smart, safe decisions save you money.”

Other popular workplace wellness programs include United HealthGroup's Personal Rewards and Quest Diagnostic's Healthy Quest. Companies that already have adopted these comprehensive wellness programs include Maidenform, Viacom, Timberland, the American Diabetes Association, SunTrust and Pitney Bowes. And more employers are jumping on the bandwagon.

A recent survey of around 600 employers, conducted by Towers Watson and the National Business Group on Health, reported that by 2012, 33 percent of employers would be adopting incentive-based wellness programs alone -- up from 6 percent in



2010. Boyce sees corporate wellness programming as a natural outcome of a responsible work environment. "Employees who exercise, watch their weight, stop smoking and adopt other healthy behaviors should be rewarded as part of a corporate culture that rewards the right behavior," he says.

Workplace wellness programs use a variety of strategies to target a variety of lifestyle arenas. Check out a slideshow of just a few of the latest tactics that employers are using to promote wellness and healthy living -- are any of them happening at your job right now?

Simple Wellness Solutions

*Need support creating
a wellness program
at your work?*

*Get in touch with us at
416.456.18.57*

info@proactivemovement.com

www.proactivemovement.com