



Steps toward creating Successful Wellness Programs

1. Find “Champions of Wellness”

Within every organization there are members who have a strong belief in the value of an individual's responsibility for his or her own health and wellness. They may not be outspoken about their philosophy; but nonetheless, they know that practicing healthy habits helps them maintain their good health. These members are the “Champions of Wellness” within your organization and they are an untapped resource that can be utilized to get your employee wellness program underway.

2. Create a committee

Once the “Champions of Wellness” have been identified, solicit their support by asking for their participation on a wellness committee. Explain to them that the role of the committee will be to identify, plan, and create health initiatives for the organization. If they are unable to participate on the committee, ask if they would be willing to post wellness messages or activities in their departments when the program gets underway. These “champions” will be valuable resources to the program in some capacity.

Additional hints

- a. A wellness committee may be formed by appointment of senior leadership or by soliciting volunteers. Both tactics seem to have benefits. The most important factor is the commitment of the committee members to actively participate in health promotion.
- b. The leader of the committee needs to be someone who is able to work with a diverse group of people and who is able to motivate the team into action.

Additional hints continued

- c.** The optimal size for a committee is eight to 15 members. This allows the representation of various departments of the organization and yet is small enough to encourage participation of all members.
- d.** If your organization has internal health and wellness resources, such as a medical department, make sure that representatives of these resources are on the committee.
- e.** The timing and frequency of committee meetings will be dictated by the intensity of ongoing activities. There will be “peak” times that will entail more meetings than at other times
- f.** The wellness committee needs to be a cohesive and supportive group that develops, guides, and oversees all of the organization’s wellness efforts. This is no small task. The committee members will be recognized throughout the organization as the driving force behind wellness activities.
- g.** The wellness committee will create a vision statement that will be the foundation for all wellness initiatives.

3. Secure senior leadership support

■ Ideally, obtaining senior leadership support would be Step #1. However, it may take the work of the committee to provide the valuable data necessary to convince the senior leaders that this is a very important initiative that the organization needs to implement. Either way, a program needs the support of leadership so that all employees are aware that the wellness program is now a part of the strategic plan of the organization and has a high priority.

4. Obtain baseline data

■ Encouraging employees to take part in a Health Assessment will provide baseline data about the most important health issues affecting the employee population. UnitedHealthcare provides a Health Assessment within the **myuhc.com**[®] consumer Web site. If your organization has been with UnitedHealthcare for at least one year, your medical claims data (with employee names and identifying information removed) can also provide invaluable baseline data that may be utilized in the formation of a wellness strategy. If your organization is new to UnitedHealthcare, there may have been a recent health assessment or claims data analysis carried out by another insurer or vendor.

5. Identify areas for intervention

Once the baseline data has been analyzed to identify the most significant health issues for the organization, the committee can determine the order and time sequence of intervention strategies. Long-term planning is an essential component of the wellness committee as change does not happen overnight.

6. Set measurable goals

The only way to measure the success of a wellness program is to set goals that are both attainable and measurable. For example, an objective might be to reduce the number of employees who smoke from 33% to 28% during the first year of the program. Another example might be to reduce the rate of obesity among employees from 22% to 15%. Even a goal that states that the organization will improve the participation of its employees in wellness activities from 18% to 25% is a measurable objective. The significance of measurable goals is that they can be expanded each year as the working environment gradually shifts to a more supportive organization for wellness.

7. Access tools through the Communication Resource Center

UnitedHealthcare offers a wide variety of tools for promoting health and wellness. Simply visit the Employer eServices® Web site at **employerservices.com** and click “Communication Resource Center.” You’ll find articles on many wellness topics in addition to communication materials to help employees take full advantage of the benefits you offer. There are even tools to help you build a health and wellness newsletter, plan your communication efforts and more. If you can’t find exactly what you need, contact your UnitedHealthcare representative for assistance.

8. Create an evaluation strategy

All successful wellness programs must incorporate an evaluation strategy within their plans in order to monitor their successes. This will entail measuring the data from year to year and program to program to analyze the impact of the overall wellness program. Evaluation that shows an impact will also have a greater likelihood of ongoing senior leadership support for the wellness initiatives.

Check list for creating a Successful Wellness Program

Steps toward wellness	Completion date
1. Find champions of wellness	
2. Create a committee	
3. Secure senior leadership support	
4. Obtain baseline data	
5. Identify areas for intervention and implement	
6. Set measurable goals	
7. Create an evaluation strategy	
8. Access communication tools	

References:

WELCOA, Wellness Councils of America. The Seven Benchmarks of Success, <http://www.welcoa.org/wellworkplace>.

O'Donnell, Michael P. Health Promotion in the Workplace (Third Edition), Delmar Thomson Learning, 2002.

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