5 components of a successful wellness program

Companies with effective wellness programs are implementing benefits differently to promote a culture of wellness and, as a result, have happier and better prepared employees. Build an employee wellness program that helps contain health care costs and improve employee engagement with these five practical tips:

1. **Promote a culture of wellness.**

Successful companies know lasting wellness must be a lifestyle change – not just for employees, but for the entire organization too. This means that companies may need to establish a holistic approach, in which leaders participate and employees’ total health is considered: physical, financial, social, spiritual and more. Benefits options, flexible scheduling, paid time off, health programs and employee socials are just a few ways to foster a culture of wellness.

2. **Focus on effective communication.**

If a company has a corporate wellness program, but employees don’t know it exists, is it making a difference? The answer is “probably not!” Successful programs need to include an effective communication component with promotional materials that are attractively displayed, at an appropriate reading level, and easy to consume so employees can quickly and easily learn about wellness opportunities.

3. **Include multiple design components.**

Successful wellness programs include several different components. Employers should consider lifestyle programs to help manage stress, weight, healthy sleeping, blood pressure, tobacco use and the like. They should also consider other nontraditional, but effective, components to support these activities such as self-help books, time off for annual wellness visits, group programs and support through a nurse hotline, coaching, social media or partners such as Weight Watchers or the YMCA.

4. **Create goals to measure and report.**

Establishing both tangible measurement and regular reporting are vital to successful wellness programs. These measures can help companies to fine-tune programs and communications, as
well as to help organization leaders understand the positive impact of these programs. Consider measuring participation, workers’ compensation claims, employee absences, and overall employee satisfaction and engagement with benefits.

5. Don’t forget employee rewards.

For some employees, having a wellness program available may not be enticing enough to participate, but if you throw in a carrot many are willing to give it a try. According to the 2014 Aflac Workforces Report, the majority of employees (79 percent) at least somewhat agree they’d be willing to change their lifestyle habits if it meant lower insurance premiums and 87 percent say it’s fair to reward employees with lower premiums or incentives to become healthier. Consider offering lower premiums, gift certificates, extra days off and other prizes to motivate employees to get involved – it’ll benefit employees and your companies’ bottom line.

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