

Keeping your company strong
starts with a healthy foundation.
All you need is a plan.

Employer Guide to Wellness in the Workplace



Congratulations.
You're about to make
a huge impact on
your employees and
their families.

And we're going to show
you just how to do it.



Good health is great for business.

You're on the verge of breaking new ground at your company. By choosing to move forward with a wellness plan, you have an incredible opportunity to change the lives of the people you see and work with everyday. Starting now, you're setting the groundwork for a new culture of health and wellness at your worksite.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average person spends 54% of their waking hours at work.¹ And, nearly two out of three individuals are interested in participating in wellness programs, and 20% are even willing to pay extra for a wellness program.² So there's really no better time or place to get the wellness word out. You can count on Empire BlueCross BlueShield (Empire) for the support, guidance, tools and materials you'll need to help you start building a customized wellness campaign.

Healthier companies and healthier employees go hand in hand.

Improving the health and wellness of our workforce can lead to extraordinary potential savings. For example, it's estimated that savings from reduced obesity rates could reach \$282.6 billion.³ A reduction in tobacco use could save another \$190.5 billion.⁴ When your employees are doing well, chances are that your bottom line is, too.

What do we really mean by "wellness?"

Wellness means having the energy and vitality to be productive, and feel and perform your best.

That's great, but why wellness at work?

Turn on the TV, go online, read the paper or just look around. There's no escaping the fact that our nation is in a health crisis. But how does that affect your company? Plenty. The single issue driving the cost of medical, pharmacy, disability, behavioral health, workers' compensation, absenteeism and presenteeism (coming to work when you're sick) is the lifestyle choices people make.

Here are some startling facts:

- Chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease account for 75% of our nation's health care costs.⁵
- Full-time workers in the U.S. who are overweight or obese and have other chronic health conditions miss an estimated 450 million additional days of work each year compared with healthy workers – resulting in an estimated cost of more than \$153 billion in lost productivity annually.⁶

- The excess cost to employers of employees who use tobacco, factoring in increased medical cost and loss of productivity increases to approximately **\$3,400 per year per smoking employee.**⁷

You can't afford to leave well-enough alone.

Helping your employees achieve improved health is one of the best long-term strategies for reducing your health care costs. A study of over 50 health and wellness programs that included 370,000 employees found a dramatic reduction in sick leave, workers' compensation claims and overall health costs.

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Start building your foundation

We'll take you step by step, employee by employee, to a new culture of health and a healthier bottom line.

It's time to draw up your plan.

Your goal is to build a lasting culture of health at your company. And the best way to begin is to get your senior leadership on board. Ask them to get behind promotions and support and approve employees' access to wellness resources. Your leaders can be your best wellness champions by sending emails directly to employees encouraging them to participate. Other ideas can include adding healthy tips to regular communications, sponsoring or participating in wellness challenges and even sharing success stories of their own path to wellness.

Make wellness a company value. Then really promote it!

It's up to you and your senior leaders to start putting your plan into action. Once they're in for the long haul, your next step is to get the word out to employees that wellness is a company value. Give them time in their day they can dedicate to their wellness plan and learn about healthy ideas they can use with their families. Here are some great ways to get started:

Step 1

Build a wellness team – When you've chosen your team leaders, think about also setting up a wellness team. Here's a great tip – your wellness team should be a winning combination of management, front line staff and employees from every health status – not just athletes and gym-goers. And if you have multiple locations, consider choosing individuals or teams from each office. Once you've selected your team, set up a meeting to schedule and encourage continuous communication.

Step 2

It pays to do a little investigating – Find out what health issues your employees are concerned about. You can use aggregate data from an online health assessment or onsite health screenings. You can get customized information about your employees by conducting an interest or behavior survey. For example, you could ask them what health topics they are interested in; what kinds of screening or physical activities they would like to attend at work; and how they think you could help them become healthier. You can leave surveys in common areas so employees can fill them out at their convenience. Be sure to let them know the surveys are confidential. Once you get a good idea, you can better choose which wellness programs will go over well, so employees will be more likely to participate.

Step 3

Figure out your best approach:

- Decide what the focus of your program will be: awareness, education, behavior change, culture enhancement, etc.
- How often will you have an onsite program and how long will it run?
- Who's the targeted audience: staff only, spouses, dependents, retirees?
- Consider interventions that would impact both the low-risk and high-risk staff.
- Identify incentives that will increase participation such as low cost giveaways for participation or raffle/door prizes like fitness equipment, lunches, gift certificates or even paid time off.





Step 4

Lay out a specific plan for your wellness campaign –

Here's your chance to be creative. Think about creating a vision/mission statement for health and wellness that can inspire and motivate your fellow employees.

Start planning:

- **Set specific goals and objectives** that can be measured, like lowering cholesterol, group weight loss programs or a quitters club for smokers.
- **Develop a timeline** for putting your plan into action.
- **Delegate roles and responsibilities.** Choose reliable, inspiring personalities to be team captains, or ambassadors.
- **Itemize** a budget for promotions and events, such as incentives, posters and handouts about onsite programs.
- **Promote** health and wellness information and tools with the help of Time Well Spent, your online resource.

Step 5

Begin communicating directly to employees – What's the best way for your employees to receive messages from your company's leaders? Think about what your employees prefer: letters, emails or company meetings. And remember to communicate throughout the year, not just at the kick-off.

Step 6

Set up a wellness fair – It's a great idea to kick-off your wellness program with a wellness fair. You can even plan several fairs throughout the year to keep your employees motivated.

Step 7

Evaluate and communicate your results – Encourage employees by showing evidence of programs' success.

Wellness Goals

Your wellness plan objectives should take your business's priorities for employee health improvement and make them specific and measurable. The goals you set need to be attainable and flexible, to evolve over time. To give you some ideas, we've mapped out example goals and provided samples of tools and programs you can implement to support them.

Year one - focus on education

- Introduce wellness program and utilize free tools and resources to educate employees on healthy behaviors.
- Build awareness of tools available to identify health risk and programs to help members improve or maintain their health.
- Educate employees on how to be better health care consumers.
- Introduce the Health Assessment, Wellness Calendar, Time Well Spent and **empireblue.com**.

Year two - focus on engagement

- Increase engagement in health and wellness programs to improve member health.
- Make health part of the work culture; identify health champions to promote activities and health education.
- Use Health Assessment and Biometric Screening data to begin to measure success and determine future programs.
- Introduce ConditionCare and Biometric Screenings.

Year three - focus on empowerment

- Reward employees for improving or maintaining their health.
- Develop robust communications strategies based on organizational needs.
- Maintain, improve, manage and reinforce employee health – it's part of everyday work culture.
- Introduce Condition Kits and Healthy Lifestyles.

Scope out the neighborhood

Take a look around. What can you do to make your worksite a healthier environment? You've got plenty of opportunities to promote healthy activities right under your nose.

- **Have you checked your vending machines lately?** Chances are your employees have and we think they might not be stocked with apples. But they could be. Ask your local vendors about healthier grab-and-go options like yogurt, granola bars, fruit and other healthy snacks.
- **Got stairs? Anyone using them?** If they can't get to a treadmill, why not use the office built-in gym? Remind your employees that they've got great cardio devices only steps away like using the stairs instead of the elevator, walking over and speaking to someone instead of calling them, and passing by great parking spots for ones that are farther away. These are all great exercise opportunities!
- **Bagels again?** Who orders the food for company meetings? Next time, why not trade in the old stand-bys for healthier substitutes like salads, veggies, or trail mix.
- **Send reminders.** What can you remind employees to do immediately? How's their posture at their desks? Are keyboards designed to avoid carpal tunnel? Are employees lifting heavy objects correctly? You can't send too many tips and reminders about how to get healthier and avoid injuries.
- **Emotional health connection.** Make sure your employees know that they have a place to turn if stress or substance abuse problems arise. Post Employee Assistance Program notices in plain sight like in break rooms and cafeterias.
- **Create a smoke-free workplace.** You can use rewards to motivate your employees to quit smoking and suggest programs to help them stop.

Do incentives get employees to participate in healthy activities? You bet!

Incentive	Value	Expected participation
Trinkets and giveaways	Under \$25	10% -15%
Cash/merchandise	\$25 - \$75	30% - 50%
Cash/merchandise	\$100 - \$500	70% -80%
Benefit design/premium breaks	n/a	80% -90%

Source: Hunnicut, David: Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA) website, 2007; National Wellness Institute nationalwellness.org.

You can incent your employees to participate in many types of health activities. Here are some of the most popular:

- Health assessments
- Biometric screenings
- Special activities or events
- Quitting smoking
- Well visits
- Health improvement program
- Preventive screenings
- Health assessment score
- Meeting targeted biometric levels (weight, blood pressure, cholesterol)
- Disease management programs



Take good measurements

When it comes time to size up your wellness program, you're going to need positive proof that your plan is working and how it's affecting your company's bottom line.

How should you be measuring your plan's success?

- See how many employees registered for the program.
- Use surveys and pre/post questionnaires to get feedback on employees and develop next year's plan.
- Use aggregate reports from health screenings or an online health assessment to measure improvements over previous years.
- Check attendance, sick leave usage and employee turnover.

What should you be measuring? Ask yourself:

- Who is participating?
- Are employees happy with the program?
- Did they learn anything new?
- Will they make a behavior change as a result of what they learned?
- Did their numbers change (weight, cholesterol, blood pressure, etc.)?
- Do we have monthly active users (also known as MAUs)? Many wellness programs experience a drop in participants as the months go on. But if a significant number of employees keep coming back to participate in wellness programs then you know you have something good.⁸

- Have there been improvements in productivity? Before the cost savings begin, employers should see an uptick in worker productivity. Is morale improving; is there an increase in collaboration and teamwork; or is paid time off dropping? The first year of any good wellness program is about employee productivity – not about cash.⁸

How to use your results:

- Keep communicating. Make sure feedback is clear, constant and is shared with management, the wellness team and employees.
- When providing feedback, recognize employees' successes by sharing aggregate campaign results and thank everyone who participated.
- Encourage employees to volunteer and share their successes so they can inspire others.
- Justify your budget dollars: volunteer time, newsletters, business and professional publications and program enhancements.
- Let us know! Share your success stories with your Empire representative.



Employee wellness at work, at home and beyond

As part of your wellness plan, remind your employees they've got their own tools and resources that they can access anytime, anywhere!

Health and Wellness programs⁹

When your employees experience fewer health complications, the result is a healthier, more productive workforce and potentially lower overall health care costs. Our health and wellness programs help achieve this by offering each employee and covered family member the right level of support to help them live and feel better. This helps them become more informed about, and involved in, their health and wellness through a combination of targeted programs, services and one-on-one professional support. For example:

EmpireBlue.com

EmpireBlue.com offers valuable health and wellness tools and resources to help employees stay healthy and make more informed choices about their care. Employees can keep track of their health with our confidential health record, get up-to-date health information, watch videos about health and wellness topics and take advantage of health-related discounts.

SpecialOffers

Saving money is good. Saving money on things that are good for you — that's even better. With SpecialOffers, your employees can access more than 50 discounts on products and services that help promote better health and well-being.

Healthy Lifestyles

Healthy Lifestyles offers a guided online experience to help improve your employees' health. This program addresses how your employees' choices and behaviors can affect their physical, social and emotional well-being. Employees complete a Well-Being Assessment and receive their own customized Well-Being Plan. Other online tools help them keep tabs on their fitness, nutrition, stress and more. Participants can connect with other participants to share experiences and get social support and tips on health topics. When employees take charge of their health, it helps lower their medical costs and improve their performance at work.

Well-Being Assessment (WBA)

The WBA is a confidential health questionnaire that assesses physical and emotional health and identifies at-risk behaviors. It also looks at each person's overall well-being, giving insight to physical, emotional and social health.

Based on an employee's WBA responses, a personalized well-being report is generated, which offers actionable recommendations targeted to the individual.

24/7 NurseLine

The toll-free 24/7 NurseLine gives your employees round-the-clock answers to health questions. Registered nurses help your employees decide if they should go to the doctor's office, emergency room or hospital. They also can help your employees find a nearby in-network facility. This can help lower absenteeism and health care costs

ConditionCare

ConditionCare supports employees and their covered dependents who have one or more chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes, coronary artery disease, heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Participants have access to a nurse coach and a team of specialists who work to help employees better understand their condition and follow their doctors' plans of care.

ConditionCare End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)

Our ESRD program assigns nurse coaches to help educate employees about their conditions and guide them through ESRD therapy. The program helps improve member's adherence to physician's plan of care and prevent avoidable hospitalizations.

Future Moms

Future Moms offers education and support to help your employees have a healthy pregnancy. Moms-to-be get assessments to help spot any risks and educational materials. A team of OB/GYN nurses and specialists follow up throughout the pregnancy to make sure moms-to-be are making healthy decisions and following their doctors' plans of care. Expecting moms can also call our team of nurses for support or to ask questions during the pregnancy and after delivery.

MyHealth Advantage

MyHealth Advantage reviews your employees' claims for gaps in care and health risks that could lead to health problems and costs. Then we mail them a confidential MyHealth note. The note outlines specific actions that can help the employee improve their health and lower their health care costs, like pointing out potential drug interactions or reminding the employee about recommended health checkups and screenings. We also notify your employees' physician and our case management team if we discover a timely alert.

Case Management

Following a major hospitalization, our dedicated nurse case managers offer support, information and regular contact. The nurses can help to coordinate discharge instructions, coordinate follow-up care and arrange medical services like home health care. Case Management helps employees get healthier and return to work when the time is right.

Behavioral Health

Just like physical well-being, your employees' emotional well-being can help your organization stay competitive. Employees who are dealing with depression, anxiety, stress or substance abuse need help. Our Behavioral Health program is integrated with our health plans. It includes an extensive network of providers and facilities, including psychiatrists, social workers and residential treatment centers.

Quick Care Options

This program helps employees make better decisions by educating them on the value and convenience of emergency room (ER) alternatives. We offer a variety of member education materials about types of ER alternatives, what services they offer, and information on cost savings. And, our online tools can help employees find nearby facilities that are in-network.

Cost and Quality

Cost and Quality is a member outreach program designed to lower the costs of expensive imaging procedures. If an employee qualifies they are contacted about equal-quality, lower cost imaging alternatives in their area. We'll even help your employee make an appointment at the alternative facility. The program is voluntary and available in larger metropolitan areas.

Employee Assistance Program

Life's pressures can take a toll on anyone's physical, emotional and mental health. Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help by finding the resources to help get employees back on track and decide on their next steps. We can help them 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We can arrange for free counseling sessions, find day care, handle identity theft, assist with smoking cessation or connect with a lawyer if they have legal concerns.



Take your wellness plan to the next level with these additional wellness tools.

Time Well Spent

Time Well Spent is an online communications toolkit that covers a variety of health and wellness topics. It includes posters, articles and more. Time Well Spent includes everything you need to start a wellness campaign in your workplace. Visit

TimeWellSpent.empireblue.com to get started today.

Health and Wellness Calendar

This simple yet powerful tool gives your employees access to wellness resources, programs and services. By focusing on one health topic each month, the calendar helps you engage your employees as a group and make wellness a shared activity. Just go to

wellnesscalendar.empireblue.com.

Engagement Videos

Help drive awareness and engagement in health programs with free one- to three-minute, employee-facing videos. Topics include 24/7 NurseLine, Future Moms, ComplexCare, ConditionCare, MyHealth Advantage and MyHealth Coach. Each video includes a high level introduction of the wellness program, the program benefits, what to expect and how to enroll. You can post the videos on your intranet site or embed them in an email. Available in English and Spanish.

Condition Kits

A Condition Kit is a six-month educational campaign for your workplace. We'll give you a step-by-step guide on what to send to your employees each week. There are fliers and posters to post in your workplace. Plus, articles, emails, videos and even a quiz that you can send to your employees.

Condition Kits are available free of charge. Topics include: diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), heart disease, pregnancy, allergies, arthritis, migraines, and lung disease (COPD).

Employer webinars

These free events share tools and information to help boost wellness in the workplace. Topics are recorded and available for download on the Time Well Spent website. Events feature success stories from our clients, overviews of free online tools and strategies to inspire wellness in your workplace. Register for events and listen to past events by visiting the "Webinar" section of Time Well Spent.

Health and wellness screensavers

Looking for a simple way to influence your employees to make good health care decisions? Download our free screensavers on Time Well Spent to your employees' computers. The screensavers feature lifestyle images highlighting our health and wellness programs and tips.

We're here to help you any way we can.

We're excited that you're about to take this important leap in creating a culture of health at your company and we look forward to your healthy results. It's true that having healthy employees is a great way to keep your bottom line healthy; but we're also proud to help you to keep the people you value and their families healthy and happy for a very long time.

If you'd like more information, please contact your Empire representative.



- 1 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics website: American Time Use Survey Summary (November 2012): [bls.gov](#).
- 2 2008 Survey of Health Care Consumers. Deloitte Center for Health Solutions.
- 3 Davis, *Boston Globe*. 2011.
- 4 Baicker et al, *Health Affairs*. 2010.
- 5 National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 17, 2009.
- 6 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index data collected between January 2 and October 2, 2011.
- 7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Morbidity, and Economic Costs (November 2010): [cdc.gov](#).
- 8 MedCity News website: *How can an employer tell if its corporate wellness program is really working?* (April 10, 2013): [medcitynews.com](#).
- 9 Programs available to members are based on those purchased by employer.