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Fitness Works at Work, Inc. delivers complete health promotion programs, fitness center management and ergonomic solutions. Our integrity and hands-on approach with clients and their employees is the basis of our working philosophy. We are focused on our promise: to start every working man and woman on the balanced path to reap the joys of life by delivering tools they need to sustain a lifelong state of well-being.

Meditation reduces stress, strengthens the immune system and improves attention by helping the brain process information more effectively. Many FWA clients offer onsite meditation classes and are pleased with their success.

WORKSITE WELLNESS THAT WORKS

Many HR professionals see the need and want to address the growing health care crisis by getting a wellness initiative up and running. However, their organization may not be at the stage where it can invest resources in a full-blown population health management program consisting of employee health risk appraisals, disease management features, and top-end data-driven programs to address risk factors. The good news is that most organizations can start on a smaller scale, by planning a variety of wellness activities to get a wellness initiative up and running.

Keep in mind there are a couple of pre-requisites for a successful wellness program.

- > First of all, there needs to be commitment from senior management. Even though you may not be able to have full funding for a program, having management buy-in from the beginning is a definite plus if you are hoping to grow the program year-to-year with funding for more programming resources.
- > Secondly, it is important to understand that a wellness initiative has to be a long-term commitment. Programs build momentum and the employees are at different levels of making behavioral changes. Don't be discouraged if you don't see results quickly or participation doesn't catch on immediately. Having a consistent program providing accurate health and fitness information and events will surely make an impact in the long-run.

Planning is important.

Take the time to think about where you want to go with the wellness program. Here are some questions to consider:

- What is the company culture?
- What are the top health insurance cost drivers?
- What are the employee demographics and interests?
- What does your health insurance provider and EAP provider offer for wellness program options?
- What are you currently offering on-site?

Once you have done your research and planning, the next step is to provide employees with information, tools and knowledge to enable them to better manage their health and the health of their families, particularly in the areas that are impacting your medical claims. Although every organization is different, it is safe to assume that the majority of the wellness programming should focus on three preventable factors: poor nutritional habits, lack of physical fitness and tobacco usage.

Here are some implementation ideas.

- Offer a variety of educational and informational opportunities to encourage healthy behavior. Wellness seminars and workshops, on-site screenings, information tables and on-line health programs can reach a wide employee audience made up with individuals at different stages of behavior change.
- Offer physical fitness activities. Walking classes, running clubs, group exercise classes, a specialty class such as Yoga, Pilates, or Tai Chi, an on-site fitness center – offer whatever your budget allows. Being physically active is a key in preventing most lifestyle diseases.

Researchers at the Mayo Clinic have developed a vertical workstation, the "walk and work desk", equipped with a treadmill so users could walk while they worked. In a study, published in a recent issue of the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 15 obese, sedentary workers who normally burned 72 calories per hour seated at their desk were tested walking for an hour at the workstation while typing. They burned an average of 191 calories per hour walking the equivalent of one mile per hour. If the workstation was used a couple of hours a day, it would represent a 44-66 pound weight loss over the course of the year. **What will they think of next?**

Hypnosis is another tool to include in a smoking cessation program. A study conducted by Ohio State University concluded that smokers who underwent hypnosis had a better chance of being smoke-free than others who did not have the intervention. Hypnosis isn't a magic bullet but is useful along with nicotine replacement therapies, acupuncture and individual and group counseling.

How do you get the job done?

Pulling together a wellness program that makes sense and is attractive to employees requires staff time and it is important to make one person responsible for getting the job done. HR professionals are multi-taskers to be sure, but they also are dealing with many corporate issues that require immediate attention and wellness programs can be put on the back burner. For a program to get underway, an enthusiastic coordinator needs to devote a few hours a week to keep the wellness ball rolling. It may be worth the money to have a wellness consulting organization step in and help organize, promote and provide content for the wellness program.

How can a wellness consulting organization help with your program?

- Planning, organizing and branding your program and helping you to make decisions on what programs to offer. For example, what behaviors should be targeted? Should you offer a health risk appraisal?
- Providing program content – seminars, workshops, fitness classes, wellness coaching and employee goal setting -- enriching any current wellness offerings already established.
- Developing a sensible wellness calendar of events to coordinate all your programs that you have available from your health insurance provider, EAP and any additional programs.
- Marketing and "selling" the wellness programs to employees with promotional material and health information.
- Organizing and facilitating the wellness events and activities.
- Establishing metrics for analyzing results and then evaluating participation and reporting on metrics.

Depending on the services you are looking for, using the services of a wellness consulting organization may be cost-effective, time efficient and can insure program success. There is no magic bullet when it comes to lowering health care costs. But having a well-structured, upbeat, on-going wellness initiative can lead to positive health attitude change and health risk reduction for employees.

New ActiHealth Lifestyle Pilot Programs Underway!

Fitness Works at Work is running ActiHealth Lifestyle Programs using the ActiPed All-Day Activity Monitor at Flir Systems and Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Inc. this fall. The goal of this exciting new program is to help participants increase their physical activity, thus making a positive impact on weight management and other metrics such as blood pressure and cholesterol. In this three month pilot program, employees will set goals with a Fitness Works at Work fitness coach and will be given the ActiPed to monitor their activity. Over the three months, they will meet with their coach periodically to assess progress and receive feedback and motivation. The ActiPed, which is worn on the shoe accurately records steps, distance traveled, active time and calories burned. For more information on setting up an ActiHealth Program in your organization, email iris@faw.com or phone the FAWW office at 508-653-4135.