

Health Promotion Works

Ongoing research supports the benefits of worksite health promotion programs as a proven health and productivity management strategy.²² For the small/medium-sized employer, the influence of health promotion on health care spending may be negligible simply because of their type of health plan (e.g., fully-funded rather than self-funded). However, health promotion's impact on productivity-related measures such as sick days, disability, and presenteeism can be significant to the small/medium-sized employer, making it well worth the investment.

In the remainder of this report, you are encouraged to:

- Review core practices and strategies that address worksite health within the context of a small/medium-sized company.
- Accept the challenge to champion health promotion efforts.
- Begin to lay out a worksite health promotion plan based on your company's size, needs/interests, and available resources.

SAVINGS PER DOLLAR INVESTED IN COMPREHENSIVE WORKSITE HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMS

From a meta-review of 56 published studies of worksite health promotion programs²³

- An average 27 percent reduction in sick leave absenteeism
- An average 26 percent reduction in health costs
- An average 32 percent reduction in workers' compensation and disability management claims costs
- An average \$5.81-to-\$1 savings-to-cost ratio

In a 2010 review of workplace wellness programs in predominantly companies of 1,000 employees or more²⁴

- An average return-on-investment of \$3.21 to \$1 for medical costs and a \$2.73 to \$1 for absenteeism

In a critical review of 16 studies published between 2004 and 2008, all studies reported "favorable clinical and/or cost outcomes."²⁵



Mike Martin
City Manager

City of Burien, Washington

City of Burien Wellness Works

Company Overview

- Local government
- Burien, Washington
- 63 employees

Program Components

- Comprehensive program supporting healthful lifestyles for employees by providing opportunities and tools to enhance mind, body, and spirit.
- Employee-based wellness committee that designs, develops, and promotes activities to peers.
- Program design based on survey responses and health risk assessment data.
- Operating plan developed to provide awareness, motivation, cultural support, and behavior change in stress management, nutrition, and physical activity.
- Multiple programs offer something for everyone, targeting all levels of readiness to engage (e.g., educational material, active programs, and fun activities).
- Program marketed through monthly staff meetings to encourage and recognize wellness achievements.

Program Success Story

- *Well City Award* recipient, resulting in 2% savings on medical premiums.
- 96% participation rate.
- Program supports leadership and organizational values and includes employee recognition for participation and lifestyle improvement.
- Wildly popular Wii Bowling tournaments—high participation and reported stress relief.

City Manager's Statement

"The notion of 'wellness' is not a recent invention. The simple truth that a sound body promotes an active mind is centuries old. Progressive organizations know this. It is the same balance of mind and body that we encourage in our employees. We know it makes them better public servants and, we hope, happier people. Both are important to us."

