

Linking Health and Productivity

As discussed, the *productivity-related* costs of poor health are greater than the direct medical costs and impact an organization's work output substantially. In fact, the evolving field of Health and Productivity Management (HPM) has shown the negative impact not only of common chronic health conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes, heart disease) on employee productivity, but also lifestyle-related risks (e.g., tobacco use, obesity, low-physical activity) on productivity-related variables.¹⁰⁻¹⁵

Presenteeism, a metric emerging in the field of HPM, is gaining more attention from decision makers. It refers to diminished on-the-job performance due to impairment by health risk factors, health problems, tobacco use, or work/life issues. Unmanaged health issues, such as diabetes, migraine headaches, or asthma attacks, when viewed cumulatively across an employee population, can impair productivity considerably.¹⁰⁻¹⁵ As illustrated on the previous page, presenteeism—compared to other cost drivers—is a significant liability to company performance.

Absenteeism (e.g., sick days) and short-term/long-term disability are productivity measures that impact the organization when employees are not at work. When you have only a small number of employees and a few are absent for illness or disability even for a couple of days, it can have a significant impact on productivity and overall company performance.

For example, can the business operations of your company of eight to ten employees handle a 20 to 25 percent absenteeism rate due to employee health issues? Or, what would be the ongoing impact to organizational output and quality if your employees' on-the-job productivity were reduced 10 to 30 percent because of health risks (e.g., obesity, stress) or health status (e.g., diabetes, migraine)?

THE BOTTOM LINE? HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED REGARDLESS OF COMPANY SIZE.



William N. Ward
CEO

Front Range Internet, Inc.

FRII Wellness Program

Company Overview

- Internet service provider
- Fort Collins, Colorado
- 33 employees

Program Components

- Lunch and learn seminars about stress, fitness, or healthy cooking.
- Onsite healthy cooking demonstrations.
- Annual health and cholesterol screening.
- Onsite 6-week exercise classes: yoga, pilates, and boot camp.
- Company softball team.
- 6-week walking competition.
- *Flexercise*: A flexible exercise program created to encourage employees to participate in physical activity during their free time.
- Chair massages.
- Stress reduction technique training.
- Smoking cessation programs.
- Wellness library including books, DVDs, and exercise equipment.

Program Success Story

- 75% employee participation rate.
- Program events served to benefit team building.
- Participants in approved wellness activities who earned 100 points during a 6-month period, received a discount on their health insurance premium.
- FRII received the WELCOA *Well Workplace Award* in 2009.

CEO Statement

"Our Wellness Program encourages our employees to make choices that lead to healthier and happier lifestyles. As a result, we anticipate improved productivity, higher morale, and decreased health care costs, long and short-term."

