

# Split Views on Promotion of Wellness in the Workplace



We recently asked to what extent your company encourages employee wellness. The poll results seem to suggest a split view on whether companies should get involved in their workers' general health and fitness at all.

Although 37% believe employee health is a personal matter and don't get involved, 32% said they offer many benefits, such as gym memberships, nutrition counseling and wellness seminars, and provide incentives for healthy lifestyles. In addition, 21% offer an array of benefits without incentives and 5% have an onsite fitness centre or offer discount gym memberships.

So while 37% take a hands-off approach to wellness, it's reassuring to see that another 53% provide many wellness related benefits for workers.

In which camp is your company? If it's actively promoting worker wellness, kudos to you. If not, maybe it's time for you to try to get support for a wellness program.

Studies have shown that both workers and employers benefit from workplace wellness programs. For example, one study suggests that such programs may lead to improved worker health, increased productivity and reduced costs for employers. Researchers found that:

- Wellness programs reduced medical spending by up to \$1,332 per member per year.
- On average, the wellness program saved \$2,554 per workers' comp claimant and \$451 per short-term disability claimant.
- Program participants returned to work up to 9 days sooner from workers' comp and 17 days sooner from short-term disability.
- 85% of workers who participated in the wellness program maintained or reduced their health risk level.
- Employers experienced a 6% average annual medical cost reduction overall and an average reduction of 13.5% in annual medical costs for members with core conditions.

Still need convincing? Here are five case studies of actual employers who implemented wellness programs and reaped many benefits from them.

An easy way to start addressing wellness is by giving workers safety talks, such as these from Safety Smart, on topics such as:

- Six Habits of Healthy People
- Strategies for Winning the War on Weight
- Staying Strong and Healthy.

Not a subscriber to SafetySmart? Sign up for a free trial.