

## Why Invest in Corporate Wellness?

With the rising cost of healthcare premiums that employers and employees pay, dollars spent on prevention have a big pay-off. Corporate wellness benefits still are not self evident to some executives, even though the research, real-work evidence and cost-benefit analyses supports this claim.

Part of the problem is that some executives erroneously believe that the corporate wellness benefits are mostly on the employee side. The truth is that corporate wellness benefits both the employer and employee. According to employee wellness statistics, the employer stands to gain \$2.30 to \$10.10 in cost savings per dollar spent. Employee fitness saves employers money.

Let's start with the obvious. The first reason why the concept of health promotion is important to an organization is because health care costs continue to be an issue of major concern.

We spend over \$1 trillion dollars in this country alone on health care, far more than any other nation in the world. What's more, the average annual health care cost per person in the United States far exceeds \$3,000. Because much of these costs are linked to health habits, it is possible for employers to take aggressive action toward reducing health care utilization and containing costs by taking on a health promotion program.

The second reason why the concept of health promotion is important to businesses is that the leading causes of illness are largely preventable. Believe it or not, experts suggest preventable illnesses make up approximately 70% of the entire burden of illness and associated costs in the United States. Behind these illnesses are a whole host of preventable factors including such things as tobacco use, high-risk alcohol consumption,

sedentary lifestyles, and poor nutritional habits. By leveraging a health promotion initiative, employers can take important steps toward preventing unnecessary sickness and death. This is why so many business people are attracted to the idea of developing a health promotion program. If you can reduce the burden of illness among your workforce by preventing the major causes of sickness, more of your employees will remain healthy and productive. What's more, you may even save some money in the process.

Because of the technology revolution a whole host of new health concerns have evolved such as repetitive stress injuries, low back problems, and compromised vision. Moreover, because almost one-third of the workforce now spends the lion's share of their day seated at their desks plugged into workstations, sedentary lifestyles have become a concern of epic proportion. A well designed health promotion initiative can help to address some of these concerns.

We are living in the midst of an information explosion. There has been more information produced in the last 30 years than during the previous 5,000. This process has created high levels of stress in your employees. If left unchecked, high levels of organizational stress will extract a very real toll on your business such as increased accidents, reduced productivity, unnecessary absenteeism and increased medical care costs. By implementing a comprehensive stress management intervention, it is possible for leaders of businesses to successfully combat prevalent stressors in the workplace.

While the previously mentioned list is not comprehensive, you'd have to agree that these are some pretty compelling reasons why every organization should give serious consideration to developing a worksite health promotion initiative.

# Cigarette Smoking Cessation Plan

The leading causes of death are usually listed as heart attack, stroke, cancer, etc. However, the leading “actual” causes of death in the United States are risk factors that can be modified. According to an article in the March 10, 2004 edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association, smoking is still the leading actual cause of death, killing 435,000 Americans in 2000.

Medically speaking, it is clear that no one should smoke. Smoking is not only dangerous in itself, it is the cause of numerous diseases such as; cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and many other cancers, pulmonary illness and many others. Smokers risk damage to all the major organs in the body, according to the latest report of the Surgeon General.

Quitting smoking has immediate as well as long-term benefits, according to the surgeon general’s report. The heart rate drops towards normal and circulation improves. The risk of having a heart attack or stroke or of developing lung cancer diminishes. Even seniors who quit after many years can experience positive effects. A smoker who gives up the habit at the age of 65 reduces his or her risk of dying from a tobacco-related disease by half.

With all of this evidence demonstrating how detrimental smoking is to one’s health, it is important to identify ways to break this habit. The first step to stopping smoking is a firm commitment. There are numerous support groups that meet regularly to aid people in the fight to stop smoking. There is also online support at many websites. The American Cancer Society has lists of groups available in the local communities.

Remember, tobacco addiction is both mental and physical. For most people, the best way to quit will be some combination of medicine, a method to change personal habits, and emotional support. You can consult your physician for help.

For the complete “Guide to Quitting Smoking” go to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

# Nicotine Withdrawal Symptoms

Those who have smoked regularly for a few weeks or longer, and suddenly stop using tobacco or greatly reduce the amount smoked, will have withdrawal symptoms. Symptoms usually start within a few hours of the last cigarette and peak about 2 to 3 days later when most of the nicotine and its by-products are out of the body. Withdrawal symptoms can last for a few days to up to several weeks.

- Dizziness (only lasting 1 to 2 days after quitting)
- Depression
- Feelings of frustration, impatience, and anger
- Anxiety and irritability
- Sleep disturbances
- Trouble concentrating
- Restlessness
- Headaches
- Fatigue

# Changes in Company Information

HealthFirst Medical’s computer system is only as good as the information we have input into it. It is very important that we have our clients’ current contact information and workers’ comp insurance. If your contacts or the insurance have changed at your company you can email the changes to [karinadelacruz@healthfirstmedical.net](mailto:karinadelacruz@healthfirstmedical.net) or call her at 562-926-3440 x313.

Also, when you have a workers’ comp injury, HealthFirst needs to have the patient’s social security number in order to submit the claim. Insurance companies will only look up a claim by the social security number. If your company has requested that social security number not appear on statements or bills, we will keep the patient’s information in a separate place in the patients electronic medical record. Thank you for your help.