

Frequently Asked Questions About Wellness Programs

YOUR HEALTH IS IN GOOD HANDS

Q: What is the relationship between employee behavior and their health status?

A: Employee behavior determines 50% of their health status and associated costs.¹

Q: What is the relationship between health risk and health care costs?

A: Modifiable health risks contribute substantially to overall health care costs. Approximately 25% of employee health care use is preventable and associated with smoking, stress, high blood sugar, obesity, sedentary lifestyles, depression and seat belt use.²

Q: What is the value of keeping healthy employees healthy?

A: Employees who are at low risk status in any one of most risk factors/behaviors are less costly than employees at high-risk status! When individuals overall health risk status changes over one to three years, the costs change prospectively in the same direction.³

Q: How do increases in health care premiums compare to other indicators, i.e., inflation and workers' earnings?

A: The rate of growth of health care premiums moderated somewhat, but continues to outpace other labor costs.⁴

Q: What is the relationship between health promotion and disability days?

A: Those employees who participated in a worksite health promotion program experienced a smaller increase in disability days compared to non-participants.

Employees with more health risks had a higher number of disability days.

The return on investment (ROI) is \$1.00 to \$2.30⁵

Q: What is the relationship between health risk and on-the-job productivity or presenteeism?

A: As self-reported health risk factors increases, so does the percentage of employees reporting work limitations. Life dissatisfaction, job dissatisfaction, poor health and stress have the greatest association with presenteeism.⁶

¹IFTF, Center for Disease Control and Prevention 6.

²Goetzel et al. (1998) *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 7, Anderson et al. (2000) *American Journal of Health Promotion* 8, Musich et al. (2002) *Disease Management & Health Outcomes* 9, Anderson & Knickman (2001) *Health Affairs*.

³Edington (2003) *Absolute Advantage*, Wellness Councils of America 10.

⁴Mercer Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Plans 2003 and 2004.

⁵Schultz et al., (2002) *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 18.

⁶Burton et al., (2005) *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 19.

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