Steps to help create
Successful Wellness Programs

1. Secure senior leadership support
A program needs the support of leadership so that all employees are aware that the wellness program is now a part of the strategic plan of the organization and has a high priority. However, it may take the work of the committee to provide the valuable data necessary to convince the senior leaders that this is a very important initiative that the organization needs to implement.

2. Find “Champions of Wellness”
Within every organization there are members who have a strong belief in the value of an individual’s responsibility for his or her own health and wellness. They may not be outspoken about their philosophy; but nonetheless, they know that practicing healthy habits may help them maintain their good health. These members are the “Champions of Wellness” within your organization and they are an untapped resource that can be utilized to get your employee wellness program underway.

3. Create a Wellness committee
Once the “Champions of Wellness” have been identified, solicit their support by asking for their participation on a wellness committee. Explain to them that the role of the committee will be to identify, plan, and create health initiatives for the organization. If they are unable to participate on the committee, ask if they would be willing to post wellness messages or activities in their departments when the program gets underway. These “champions” could be valuable resources to the program in some capacity.
a. A wellness committee may be formed by appointment of senior leadership or by soliciting volunteers. Both tactics seem to have benefits. An important factor is the commitment of the committee members to actively participate in health promotion.

b. The leader of the committee needs to be someone who is able to work with a diverse group of people and who is able to motivate the team into action.

c. The optimal size for a committee is usually eight to 15 members. This allows the representation of various departments of the organization and yet is small enough to encourage participation of all members.

d. If your organization has internal health and wellness resources, such as a medical department, make sure that representatives of these resources are on the committee.

e. The timing and frequency of committee meetings will be dictated by the intensity of ongoing activities. There will be “peak” times that may entail more meetings than at other times.

f. The wellness committee needs to be a cohesive and supportive group that develops, guides, and oversees all of the organization’s wellness efforts. This is no small task. The committee members will be recognized throughout the organization as the driving force behind wellness activities.

g. The wellness committee will create a vision statement that will be the foundation for all wellness initiatives.

4. Obtain baseline data

Encouraging employees to take part in a Health Assessment could provide baseline data about the most important health issues affecting the employee population. UnitedHealthcare provides a Health Assessment within the myuhc.com consumer website. If your organization has been with UnitedHealthcare for at least one year, your medical claims data (with employee names and identifying information removed) can also provide invaluable baseline data that may be utilized in the formation of a wellness strategy. If your organization is new to UnitedHealthcare, there may have been a recent health assessment or claims data analysis carried out by another insurer or vendor.
5. **Identify areas for intervention**

Once the baseline data has been analyzed to identify potential health issues for the organization, the committee can determine the order and time sequence of intervention strategies. Long-term planning is an essential component of the wellness committee as change does not happen overnight.

6. **Set measurable goals**

One way to measure the success of a wellness program is to set goals that are both attainable and measurable. For example, an objective might be to reduce the number of employees who smoke from 33% to 28% during the first year of the program. Another example might be to reduce the rate of obesity among employees from 22% to 15%. Even a goal that states that the organization will improve the participation of its employees in wellness activities from 18% to 25% is a measurable objective. The significance of measurable goals is that they can be expanded each year as the working environment gradually shifts to a more supportive organization for wellness.

7. **Access online tools for promoting wellness**

UnitedHealthcare offers a wide variety of tools for promoting health and wellness. Simply visit [www.uhctoolsforwellness.com](http://www.uhctoolsforwellness.com). You’ll find articles on many wellness topics in addition to communication materials to help employees take full advantage of the benefits you offer. There are even tools to help you build a health and wellness newsletter, plan your communication efforts and more. If you can’t find exactly what you need, contact your UnitedHealthcare representative for assistance.

8. **Create an evaluation strategy**

Incorporating an evaluation strategy may help monitor the success of the wellness program. This will entail measuring the data from year to year and program to program to analyze the impact of the overall wellness program. Evaluation that shows an impact may also have a greater likelihood of ongoing senior leadership support for the wellness initiatives.
**Wellness Program Checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps toward wellness</th>
<th>Completion date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Secure <strong>senior leadership support</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Find <strong>champions</strong> of wellness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Create a wellness <strong>committee</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Obtain <strong>baseline data</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Identify areas for <strong>intervention</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Utilize UnitedHealthcare <strong>resources</strong> on uhctoolsforwellness.com</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Set <strong>measurable goals</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Create an <strong>evaluation</strong> strategy and celebrate successes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References:

WELCOA, Wellness Councils of America. The Seven Benchmarks of Success, [http://www.welcoa.org/wellworkplace](http://www.welcoa.org/wellworkplace).

O'Donnell, Michael P. Health Promotion in the Workplace (Third Edition), Delmar Thomson Learning.

Insurance coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc. or their affiliates.