

State of Preventive Health 2008

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina



2008 BCBSNC Wellness Initiatives *Improving the Collective Health of Employees*

Take Action:

- Wellness activity
- Corporate goal
- Know your numbers! Know your goals!
Start today! campaign

Environment:

- Senior management leads the way through visible involvement and support
- Create corporate goal for employee wellness
- Provide financial incentives to encourage behavior changes
- Change vending machines – only healthy options

Awareness:

- Biometric screening
- Health risk assessment

Key Lessons Learned

Leadership support

- Build a solid business case for our wellness program.
 - Include information on projected return on investment, culture change and employee satisfaction from a wellness program.
 - Search for similar organizations that have an established wellness program.
- Gain leadership support early in the planning stages and seek out leadership champions to become actively engaged in programming initiatives.
 - For example, we implemented a wellness challenge, Walk the Talk, where each of our senior executives led a team and participated in weekly activities with employees.
 - Our senior leadership continually communicates wellness messages to employees through e-mails, town hall meetings, Family Day and departmental wellness events.
- Build an evaluation strategy into the wellness program from the beginning and routinely report major successes to leadership. This is vital in gaining support for continued programming efforts.

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Resources

- Consider the existing resources you can leverage (i.e., BCBSNC programs and/or resources within your company and community).
- Put resources in place for employees at each stage of change for physical activity, nutrition and other wellness areas.

Communication

- Leverage as many different modes of communication as possible so there are multiple touch points with employees.
 - For example, we used our Intranet, e-mails from senior leadership and Human Resources, flyers placed on desks and handouts given out at front entrances as employees arrived at work.
- Take into account your corporate culture and all site locations.
 - For example, online programming was most effective and successful with our remote site locations.
- Communicate simple, clear, concise messages as often as possible at least two months in advance of your initiatives. You must communicate early and often in order to engage employees.
 - For example, our Walk the Talk program engaged more than one-fourth of our employee population, approximately 1,200 employees.

Significant incentives

- Best practices suggest that significant incentives must be provided in order to gain maximum participation in wellness programs and ultimately, healthy behavior changes.
- Consider your employee population, culture and budget. Although “cash is king,” other rewards can incent employees, such as time off, merchandise and even recognition.
- Set rewards high enough to motivate employees yet keep them within reason of your budget.
 - We achieved 92 percent participation in our on-site health screening due to the premium contribution incentive combined with our communication efforts.