



A L A B A M A

OBESITY

TASK FORCE

WELLNESS PROGRAM GUIDE



WELLNESS PROGRAM GUIDE

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NOTE: Worksite Wellness, Workplace Wellness, Corporate Wellness, and Workforce Wellness are all terms to describe initiatives targeted at employees and offered during the work day to improve health outcomes. This guide uses the term Worksite Wellness.

Alabama Obesity Task Force Mission Statement:

“Working toward prevention and reduction of obesity for a healthier Alabama”

Purpose Statement:

The Alabama Obesity Task Force works to address overweight/obesity issues through advocacy, policies, environmental changes, and programs that support lifestyle changes.

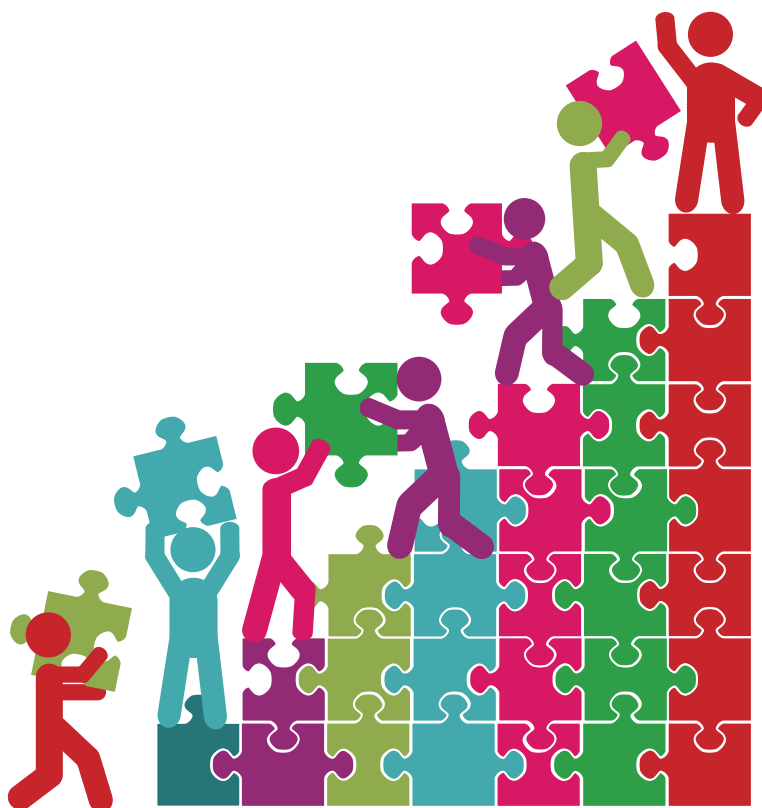
OVERVIEW

This guide is provided by the Alabama Obesity Task Force. The guide is written for worksites, but the information can easily be transferred into other settings, such as faith-based or community organizations. This document is in the public domain and openly available for reference.

This guide is divided into sections. The following is a description of each section:

- I. Section I, Why Wellness is Important, helps business leaders, administrators, Chief Executive Officers, and others understand the rationale for a wellness program. Information explaining why a worksite wellness program should be offered includes benefits for the business and employee. This section includes research, health statistics, and legal issues.
- II. Section II, Preparing for Wellness, helps program coordinators prepare a wellness plan. The planning steps and background details needed before offering a program as well as the steps to develop support are explained. Various types of pre-implementation assessments are described with Alabama-specific examples given. How to use the information to write the wellness implementation plan and gain support is described.
- III. Section III, Implementing Wellness, provides simple steps for developing a successful program. Evidence based practices are described and Alabama-specific examples are highlighted. Topics include nutrition, weight management, stress management, and physical fitness. The partner manual, Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health Worksite Wellness Toolkit, is referenced and is included as an attachment in this guide. This toolkit provides the steps for selecting and implementing a program. Both documents provide information to encourage healthy living and healthy lifestyles in the workplace.
- IV. Section IV, Sustaining Wellness, reviews evaluation tools, discusses data that can be collected, and explains how to use the results to improve and sustain a wellness program.
- V. Section V, Wellness Resources, guides the user to additional references and resources to support a worksite wellness program. Additional wellness manuals, sites to address legal issues, trends such as health coaching, tips to include persons with disabilities in worksite wellness, links to professional wellness organizations, and general references are provided.

Including all employees is strongly encouraged throughout the guide. Worksite wellness initiatives can provide benefits to everyone. While engaging in regular physical activity is critical for maintaining good health and preventing secondary conditions associated with sedentary lifestyles, persons with disabilities encounter major barriers that often prevent them from fully participating in health promoting activities. This Alabama Obesity Task Force guide strives to help employers identify solutions to these barriers. Physical activity can provide individuals with disabilities the strength and stamina required to participate in all aspects of life actively and successfully, including employment. Many persons with disabilities have lacked the opportunity to pursue an active lifestyle; therefore, the Task Force is pleased that this guide strives to create an inclusive environment. A global approach will positively affect more employees than might have previously been thought, resulting in benefits that are more far-reaching than expected.



SECTION I: WHY WELLNESS IS IMPORTANT

This section is designed for the leaders who are contemplating whether a worksite wellness program should be offered or who are trying to convince others to support the worksite wellness concept.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Wellness Guide

The purpose of the Employee Health and Wellness Program Guide is to provide Alabama-based businesses information to implement a workplace wellness program and policies.

What is Wellness?

You hear the word “wellness” and “wellness programs” a lot. But what does it really mean? Wellness is much more than the absence of illness. Wellness, as a state of health, is closely associated with your lifestyle. It can be defined as an active process of making choices and being aware that each of those choices can affect the overall total person. In this process,

we are always learning how we can make better choices or ways we can improve for our best outcome. Many wellness programs focus on nutrition, physical activity, and specific disease conditions. That is part of it, but the total picture is much more comprehensive.

Why Provide Worksite Wellness Programs?

- Worksites are a key component when the health of employees is considered. Worksites allow access to employees in a controlled environment through existing channels of communication and social support networks.
- Full-time employees spend more of their waking hours at work than anywhere else, and a substantial proportion of daily calories are also consumed during the working day, making the workplace an ideal setting to implement wellness strategies. A substantial proportion of daily calories are consumed during the working day. Many sites have existing facilities that support regular physical activity among employees, potentially reducing obesity and overweight in addition to providing other benefits. In addition, opportunities for environmental and policy change that foster behaviors such as smoking cessation, healthy dietary practices,

and increasing activity are readily available and described in this guide. This makes the worksite a prime venue for promoting healthful habits.

- **Business Benefit: Productivity Improvements**

Worksite health promotion programs are an investment in a business's most important asset, the employees. Workers are more likely to come to work and perform well when they are in optimal physical and psychological health. Employees are more likely to be attracted to, remain with, and value a business that appreciates them.

A healthy workforce is one that lends itself to being productive in nature. Research shows that positive lifestyle choices, such as healthy eating, daily exercise and avoidance of tobacco, contribute to healthy outcomes and improved quality of life. Implementing a worksite wellness program demonstrates an employer's commitment to supporting the health of its workforce. As a result, employers report:

- Better staff recruited
- Decreased absenteeism and time lost
- Improved on-the-job time utilization and decision making
- Improved employee morale, resulting in lower turnover
- Decreased rates of illness and injury
- Higher rates of employee engagement

Wellness programs create a healthy work environment and support healthy lifestyle choices. Integrating workforce wellness into a corporate culture aids employees in achieving work/life balance and assists them in living fulfilling, satisfying lives. These factors contribute to increasing employee morale.

ALABAMA SUCCESS: Burr & Foreman, LLP, a law firm in Alabama, reports an improved employee health- with an increased number of employees in a healthy weight category- and morale through several wellness programs. The firm offers health screenings, a 12-week walking program with prizes, smoking cessation programs, wellness discounts on health premiums, and a ready supply of fruit

at the office. An unexpected benefit was noted in recruiting, "Applicants like the idea that our firm cares about their wellbeing."

- **Business Benefit: Reduced Health Care Costs**

Employee wellness programs have proven to be an effective tool in reducing health care costs through behavior changes as a direct result of employee education, health policies, and programs. Workplace wellness programs can help employees manage the factors that contribute to positive health, such as maintaining a healthy weight and reducing risk of developing chronic diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes. Less illness and a reduction in secondary conditions associated with disability means businesses can reduce health plan use; thereby reducing health benefits costs, and consequently increasing earnings.

While health cost reduction from employee wellness programs may be less evident immediately than productivity gains, research shows that medically high-risk workers are medically high-cost workers, as they use additional health care and generate higher claims costs. Offering wellness programs tailored to those medically high-risk workers including employees with a disability benefit the employer and the employee in terms of dollars spent. Chronic diseases have a significant economic impact on the U.S. health care system. Medical costs associated with obesity and other chronic diseases are direct and indirect.

- **Direct medical costs may include:**

- preventive
- diagnostic
- treatment services

- **Indirect costs relate to morbidity and mortality costs.**

- **Morbidity costs are:**

- the value of income lost from decreased productivity
- restricted activity
- absenteeism

- **Mortality costs are the value of future income lost by premature death.**

When looking at obesity, Americans who are

30 or more pounds over a healthy weight cost the country an estimated \$147 billion in weight-related medical bills in 2008. Obesity accounts for over 9 percent of all medical spending. The medical costs and medical bills for an obese patient are approximately \$1,429 more per year than for a healthy weight patient. Diabetes is closely associated with obesity. The Institute for Alternative Futures diabetes model estimates that the overall number of people in the United States living with diabetes will increase 64 percent by 2025. This will increase the costs of diabetes from \$32.3 million in 2011 to an estimated \$514 billion in 2025. This is a 72 percent increase from 2010-2011 and is comparable to the total budget for Medicare in 2010.

Worksite programs are part of a public health strategy to address the increase in chronic diseases, which are predicted to cost the U.S. health care system an estimated \$4.2 trillion annually by 2023 (Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC))

Studies by the University of Michigan and Johnson & Johnson demonstrate clear financial savings for employers:

- \$1,100 a year is saved for every employee who kicks the smoking habit
- \$269 a year for every employee who progresses from sedentary to active lifestyle
- \$1,200 a year on employees who reduce their cholesterol levels from 240 milligrams to 190 milligrams
- \$177 a year for every employee who moves from obese (more than 30 pounds overweight) to a healthy weight
- The Employee Benefit: Improved Health

The culture of the worksite and the work environment are powerful influences on behavior. If the business's attitude reflects healthy choices as the normal culture, it will assist employees to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Benefits of worksite wellness programs for employees may include:

- Weight reduction
- Improved blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose levels

- Improved physical fitness
- Lower levels of stress
- Increased well-being, self-image, and self-esteem
- Less injury and illness
- Better relationships among employees and employers
- More inclusive work environment

Alabama's Health Problems

The United States is at a crossroads where the health and well-being of citizens will be determined by the actions that are taken. Lifestyles that include sitting at a computer or using electronic devices are more common and more accepted than active lifestyles of walking to the store or growing vegetables in a garden. More than 90 million people in the U.S. live with chronic illnesses. In fact, because lifestyles include too many calories, lack of physical activity, and smoking, chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke account for 70 percent of all deaths in the US. (Reference: National Healthcare Disparities Report 2011)

In Alabama, over half of the top ten leading causes of death are associated with lifestyles. The top three leading causes of death are closely associated with poor nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco use:

- heart disease
- cancer
- chronic lower respiratory diseases/COPD (Reference: Alabama 2010 Vital Statistics.)

In 2010, almost 63 percent of Alabamians were either overweight or obese. When considering obesity alone, Alabama is consistently in the top five for the highest rate of adult obesity in the nation. The obesity trend has increased quickly; in 1995 Alabama was 18.7 percent obese; in 2010 it was 27.6 percent. (Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System [BRFSS]) When considering adults with disabilities, 36 percent are obese. Obesity rates for adults

with disabilities are 58 percent higher than for adults without disabilities. (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/obesity.html>)

Obesity is associated with other health problems such as the following:

- Dyslipidemia which includes high total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- Several cancers, including endometrial, breast, and colon
- Orthopedic problems, including hip, knee, and foot pain, and osteoarthritis
- Sleep disorders, especially sleep apnea, day time somnolence
- Respiratory problem, such as shortness of breath, wheeze, cough, asthma, and COPD
- Abdominal pain, such as gastroesophageal reflux disease, gallbladder disease, or constipation
- Menstrual abnormalities, such as oligomenorrhea or amenorrhea
- Anxiety
- Limited mobility

The number one cause of death in Alabama is diseases of the heart or cardiovascular disease. In general, the term cardiovascular disease (CVD) refers to multiple conditions and diseases of the heart and blood vessels.

This includes

- coronary artery disease
- angina
- heart attack
- stroke
- high blood pressure
- congestive heart failure

Heart disease has been the leading cause of death in the United States since 1921, and stroke has been the third leading cause since 1938; together they account for approximately 40 percent of all deaths. In Alabama, 37.2

percent of adults reported having high blood pressure as compared to 28.7 percent nationwide. (Reference: CDC, AL 2009 BRFSS)

Heart disease is followed by cancer as the number two reason for death in the nation and in Alabama. The American Cancer Society reports that cancer is responsible for one of every four deaths in the United States. About 559,312 Americans-more than 1,500 people a day-will die of cancer each year. According to the 2012 American Cancer Society report, Alabama will experience approximately 10,290 cancer deaths in one year, or 28 per day. Lung cancer will account for 3,240 deaths in AL; approximately 31 percent of all estimated cancer deaths in Alabama. Cancer is caused by a variety of factors, both individual-meaning behavior, age, sex, race, family history-and environmental-which refers to viruses, radiation, and chemicals. These factors may act together or in sequence to initiate or promote the cancer. However, many types of cancer can be prevented altogether through lifestyle choices such as eating healthy, exercising regularly, avoiding the use of tobacco products and its smoke, and using skin protection. It is estimated that about 30 percent of the 559,312 cancer deaths expected to occur will be related to overweight or obesity, physical inactivity, and nutrition - and could be prevented. (Reference: American Cancer Society) In addition, many of the more than one (1) million skin cancers that are expected to be diagnosed could have been prevented by protection from the sun's rays. Nationally, adult cigarette smoking prevalence has been slowly declining since 2002. In 2009, 22.6 percent of the Alabama population smoked which ranked the 7th highest in the nation and approximately 5 percent higher than the national average. (Reference: The Burden of Tobacco in Alabama, 2011).

Diabetes is reported in 12.7 percent of Alabama residents, which is higher than the national average (8.3 percent). Alabama Department of Public Health reports:

- More than 454,000 people in Alabama are

aware that they have diabetes.

- It is estimated that as many as 200,000 more may have diabetes and do not know that they have it.
- Diabetes is one of the leading causes of death in Alabama.

Ninety percent (90 percent) of the cases of diabetes are Type 2, which is lifestyle related. Diabetes directly contributes to the incidence of heart disease and stroke, and is the primary cause of kidney failure, non-trauma related limb amputations and adult-onset blindness. The increase in cases of obesity and diabetes is similar and so closely related that the epidemic is referred to as “diabesity”. For more information, refer to “Diabesity: The Obesity-Diabetes Epidemic That Threatens America - and What We Must Do to Stop It” (Bantam), by Dr. Francine R. Kaufman, a pediatric endocrinologist, the director of the diabetes clinic at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and a past president of the American Diabetes Association.

Nutrition and physical activity are repeated risk factors for most chronic diseases. As expected, with the high rates of chronic disease in Alabama, healthy lifestyle indicators also need to improve. In Alabama,

- 31.1 percent adults did NOT participate in physical activities during the past month
- 79.7 percent do NOT eat enough (5 or more) servings of fruits and vegetables (Reference: CDC BRFSS)

In Alabama, 40.3 percent of adults with disabilities self-reported their health status as fair or poor compared to 9.9 percent of adults without a disability. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/data.html>

Legal Issues to Consider There are laws, policies, and resources that provide guidelines for establishing employee health and wellness programs. They address scope, funding, and responsibility. Wellness programs that are voluntary in nature tend to be more compliant

with governmental laws, and may be easier to implement in the workforce. The following information is general; therefore, be sure to check with your business’s legal staff for guidance.

Legal issues that must be taken into consideration include:

- Americans with Disability Act (ADA) - Title I of the ADA allows employers to provide voluntary medical examinations and activities. The information collected from voluntary medical histories, such as part of an employee wellness program, may be collected as long as all of the medical information received as part of the program is kept confidential and separate from personnel records. It is recommended that wellness programs not ask about disabilities unless they are job-related and consistent with business necessity. <http://www.ada.gov/> Instead ask the employee if they need accommodations and what they might be.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidance states, “A wellness program is “voluntary” as long as the employer neither requires participation nor penalizes employees who do not participate.” See EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Disability-Related Inquiries and Medical Examinations Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at Q&A 22 (July 27, 2000), <http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/guidance-inquiries.html>.

- Age Discrimination in Employment (ADEA) - This law prohibits discrimination based on age. The wellness program may need to create different levels for reaching goals, considering older adults (50+) who may have a harder time achieving certain levels. An example is the different age categories in marathon races. <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adea.cfm>
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)- A wellness program avoids HIPAA applicability if it is available to “similarly situated individuals,”

AND one of the following:

1. The reward is unrelated to a health care plan. For example, the reward is not a premium discount or reduction in deductible or coinsurance OR

2. The reward is related to the health care plan, but it is not contingent on satisfying a standard related to a health factor. Rather, the reward is based on participation. www.cms.gov/HIPAAGenInfo/Downloads/HIPAAALaw.pdf

- Civil Rights Act (Title VII)- The law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. www.archives.gov/education/lessons/civil-rights-act
- Internal Revenue Service- All rewards are taxable over a nominal amount. This needs to be clearly communicated to the employees. www.irs.gov
- Department of Labor- When planning your wellness program, ensure that you (or your vendor) through program design and administration documentation comply with Department of Labor laws. www.dol.gov
- Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) of 2008- As stated in the law, the act, "Amends the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), the Public Health Service Act (PHSA), and the Internal Revenue Code to prohibit a group health plan from adjusting premium or contribution amounts for a group on the basis of genetic information." The legislation also stops employers from using individuals' genetic information when decisions about hiring, firing, job placement, or promotion are made. Title II of GINA prohibits employers and other covered entities from requesting, requiring, or purchasing genetic information. See 29 C.F.R. §1635.8. One exception allows a business to ask some genetic information about an

employee or his or her family members for a voluntary health service, such as a wellness program. The employee must give written authorization. The wellness program can only report this type of information in aggregate form. See 29 C.F.R. §1635.8(b)(2)(i)(D). The rule states financial incentives must not be offered for individuals to provide genetic information as part of a wellness program. Id. at §1635.8(b)(2)(ii). If the wellness program offers financial incentives for participation and/or for achieving certain health outcomes, the program must also be open to employees with current health conditions and/or to individuals whose lifestyle choices put them at increased risk of developing a condition. Id. at §1635.8(b)(2)(iii).

For more information on legal concerns go to:

- <http://worksite-wellness-program.com/>
- http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/policy/wellness_programs.htm

ALABAMA SUCCESS: A group of employees at The Medical Association of the State of Alabama formed a wellness group. Its name, HELP (Healthy Eating and Living Program), describes the underlying theme in which they believe. They know that teamwork and support helps keep people on track. According to their spokesperson, "We have had great success stories in the past; some have kept it off, some gain theirs back. So we all realize it's a life change and that's why we are here for motivation throughout the fight." The group started by participating in a statewide campaign, and followed it with modified four (4) week competitions that reward the winners for weight loss. HELP also rewarded points for completing physical activity. Members readily admit that one challenge is that not everyone in the workplace participates. However, gaining administrative support was essential. Now they are focusing on worksite barriers that can turn into benefits. An example is that a day filled with meetings and no extra time allowed for walking breaks limits physical activity time. Taking the stairs and walking to meetings are easy solutions for this problem.



SECTION II: PREPARING FOR WELLNESS

This section covers the steps needed to develop and implement a wellness program. A variety of assessments are available to help make appropriate program choices. How to use the information to write the wellness implementation plan and gain support is described.

CHAPTER 2

ASSESSMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION

Why Are Assessments Important?

When starting a wellness program, it is important to determine which strategies will be implemented most effectively within your particular company. Assessments are a tool used to help determine an accurate picture of the health status of your company. A variety of assessments, as listed in the section below, can be utilized. The results of these assessments will help determine the wellness needs of the company and help drive your program interventions.

It is important to assess the cultural and health aspects of the organization that could impact program strategies, determine how worksite policies support or present obstacles to healthy lifestyles, and find practices that enable persons with physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental health disabilities or special needs to participate in wellness programs. This information provides a baseline for future program evaluation.

Before implementing a worksite wellness program, conducting a needs assessment can help determine administration support. This assessment determines if the administration and managerial staff are willing to participate in worksite wellness programs and encourage others to do so. It can determine if leaders see the benefits of worksite wellness programs for employees and the organization. Additionally, it will identify the types of worksite wellness activities they are willing to support.

Assessments Help Design the Program

The assessment will guide your program to

1. Determine worksite goals and objectives.
2. Determine needs and interests of the employees.
3. Identify needed policy, systems or environmental (PSE) changes.
4. Prioritize wellness interventions.
5. Maximize financial and other program resources.

1. Determine worksite goals and objectives - There are many reasons a worksite wellness program is developed. One objective for having a worksite wellness program is to help employees be healthier. Others include helping reduce health care costs, boosting employee morale, etc. Administrators and staff can help prioritize the goals based on company expectations and needs. To read more about determining specific goals and objectives go to: "<http://worksite-wellness-program.com/worksite-wellness-program-establish-goals-and-objectives/>"

ALABAMA SUCCESS: The wellness coordinator at St. Vincent's Hospital reported seeing positive public relations between associates and their wellness program. She wrote, "The staff feel more valued and have a higher level of awareness and education regarding health."

2. Determine needs and interests of the employees - Knowing the employee base will determine the type of wellness programs offered. This type of assessment is referred to as population demographics. For instance, a young female-dominant workforce will have different health concerns than an older male-dominant workforce. A short survey can be used to ask employees what they want from a wellness program; how they prefer to be notified; the venue, such as group settings or personal emails; and what topics could be offered, such as health, stress, finance, etc. This assessment can identify the various formats of wellness program activities, such as exercise classes or lunch-and-learn sessions; the most convenient times and places to

schedule activities; and can also identify employees that have expertise that may be useful to the program.

There are many assessments available. Below are examples.

a. The Strategic Alliance for Health's Worksite Wellness Toolkit- This web-based toolkit provides tools for creating a wellness program, including sample surveys and checklists. For the employee interest survey, go to: <http://www.adph.org/strategicalliance/assets/WorksiteWellnessWorkbookI.pdf>

b. Worksite Wellness for Tompkins County - This assessment introduces the idea of developing a worksite wellness program and gathers data on employee health topics and wellness committee interest. <http://www.tompkins-co.org/wellness/worksite/survey/surveyex1.html>; <http://www.tompkins-co.org/wellness/worksite/survey/surveyex2.html>

c. Wellness Council of America- Information gathered from this needs and interest survey assessment can identify various types of wellness program that your employees may be interested in. "http://welcoa.org/freeresources/pdf/ni_survey.pdf"

d. Wisconsin Health-This assessment asks about physical activity, nutrition knowledge, depression, anxiety, tobacco use, and can determine interest levels in receiving information. "[http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf_files/Worksite percent20toolkit/AppendixCsurvey.pdf](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf_files/Worksite%20percent20toolkit/AppendixCsurvey.pdf)"

ALABAMA SUCCESS: The wellness director at Energen stated that health screenings identified employees with elevated blood pressures, high glucose levels, and weight problems. Energen needed a program that

was easy to implement. Tapping into Scale Back Alabama helped. The advice this director shares is, "Look to your insurance carrier for free or low cost ideas or resources. You don't have to spend a lot of money to get a good program." Energen has tracked employees who have changed their lifestyles and, with their doctor's approval, medications for diabetes, hypertension and cholesterol were lowered or eliminated.

Most health insurance carriers provide a health information website that includes a personal health assessment. For example, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama makes one available to its members on the Behealthy.com website. The website includes a health assessment survey that provides to members an immediate personalized report that gives an overview of their current health status and ways to reduce health risks. From a wellness planning standpoint, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama will provide an aggregate summary report for employer groups who have a health assessment program for their employees. This aggregate summary report provides valuable information about the health status of their employee population and suggested programming.

3. Identify needed Policy, Systems, and Environmental, (PSE) changes-Company policies, the work environment, and the way things are done at work can have a profound impact on the health of individuals. The availability of healthy options provides increased possibilities for healthy living. Policies can become a barrier to unhealthy choices, such as not allowing tobacco on business property. Environmental changes are physical or material changes to the economic, social, or physical environment. For example, a business can promote new trails and paths -especially if they are wheelchair assessable- to encourage employee mobility and use of bicycles and mass transit systems, often referred to as active transportation. System changes are simply changes in the way things are done. If

a business has a cafeteria on campus, promoting healthy food choices or not allowing tobacco products to be sold are system changes. The results from the PSE typed assessments help to pinpoint actions for changes to make the worksite more supportive of healthy behaviors.

Below are examples of PSE assessments.

a. Walkability Tool- This tool is designed for you to assess how safe, easy, and inviting it is to walk at the workplace. http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/walkability_audit_tool.pdf

b. Vending Audit-Implementing a healthy vending machine policy in worksites can be an effective strategy in increasing access to healthy food for employees. This website provides the step-by-step tool kit. <http://www.adph.org/NUTRITION/index.asp?ID=49>

c. Policy and Environment Survey-A worksheet to help the committee review the worksite for policy and environmental changes that might be needed is found in the Strategic Alliance of Health's Worksite Wellness Toolkit, Attachment J at: <http://www.adph.org/strategicalliance/Default.asp?id=3362>

ALABAMA SUCCESS: The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) began the Alabama Healthy Vending Program two years ago as one effort to combat obesity by promoting healthier snack choices to employees and the public. The snack guidelines coincide with vending changes made by the State Department of Education in 2005. The Alabama Healthy Vending Program began with several state agencies and since then has expanded to a number of hospitals in and around the Montgomery area, including the Baptist system, Jackson Hospital, HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika, and L.V. Stabler Hospital in Greenville. During

a recent presentation on the adoption of healthy campus changes, an administrator for Baptist Health Systems reported “no losses” from offering healthy snacks. Other organizations also offering healthier vending options are Max Credit Union and Auburn University Montgomery. The program works with an organization and its current vendor to provide training and informational materials, as well as an extensive list of items that meet the nutrition standards. A link on the [ADPH Nutrition](#) website has more information about the program.

d. Tobacco Free Campus–Smoking policies can help employees quit smoking. This website provides a worksite policy evaluation tool. <http://www.adph.org/tpts/Default.asp?id=1814>

e. Mother Friendly–Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for the infant, and this Texas website helps the worksite in determining what lactation support policies are needed. <http://www.breastmilkcounts.com/mother-friendly-worksite.html>

f. Health Environment Assessment-California’s Take Action wellness plan includes the assessment, “Check for Health,” under the planning tab. This assessment is used to evaluate the culture of health in the organization and how well that culture supports employees’ healthy eating and physical activity habits. <http://www.takeactionca.cdph.ca.gov>

g. Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (CHANGE) Tool-This CDC assessment is intended for city implementation but can be used for the business site. It is a comprehensive tool that collects data, determines areas for improvement, and plans policy, systems, and environmental change strategies. <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/CHANGEtool/>

ALABAMA SUCCESS: At Integrated Medical Systems International, Inc. (IMS), weekly fresh fruit deliveries at the company’s five major facilities were already making it easier for employees to access healthy snacks. In 2010, IMS developed on-site exercise facilities at two Alabama locations, Birmingham and Homewood, and in Florida at Ft. Lauderdale. All employees at these sites were allowed 30 minutes each day to work out on company time. The company also hired fitness managers to teach various classes and provide guidance and encouragement. IMS also implemented annual wellness fairs for these employees, where they had access to important health screenings and referrals for nutritional counseling, support for smoking cessation, and other similar lifestyle change support. In just two years, this business has seen a group weight loss of more than 1,000 pounds, employees’ blood pressure readings returning to normal ranges, and improvements in blood sugar readings.

4. Prioritize wellness interventions- Health risk appraisal and health screening assessments can identify the employees’ health problems, or risks of problems, and provide targets for improvement.

✓ Health risk assessments (HRA) can be a tool to help employees manage their own health care. Ensuring employee confidentiality is vitally important when administering HRA’s to increase participation and gather accurate data. The company may use a summary of the problems and risks identified to develop programs.

Below are examples of HRAs.

a. Administering HRA’s http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/programdesign/health_risk_appraisals.htm

b. Checklist for program staff planning HRA implementation http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/HRA_checklist.pdf

c. Comprehensive health questionnaire, along with car safety, oral hygiene, sleep habits, overall satisfaction of life, and work habits [http://www.hmrc.umich.edu/content/documents/adulthra\(new\).pdf](http://www.hmrc.umich.edu/content/documents/adulthra(new).pdf)

d. A health risk assessment for Blue Cross Blue Shield members “<http://www.behealthy.com/>” This is a private password protected website for individuals on the health plan.

✓ Health Screenings involve completing a brief personal health history questionnaire, as well as biometric and biochemical measures such as blood pressure, height, weight, waist circumference, percent body fat, body mass index, blood glucose, and serum cholesterol. The screenings can help detect diseases and provide a baseline assessment of employee health.

Below is an example of a Health Screening.

a. Measures for blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides, blood glucose, and anthropometrics. <https://www.alseib.org/PDF/SEHIP/ProviderScreeningForm.pdf>

✓ Health Care Claims data can be analyzed to provide information about employee health risks and medical and pharmaceutical utilization rates. This information can be used to help develop wellness program strategies to address specific health conditions facing employees. Information about

utilization of service can be analyzed in an effort to eliminate unnecessary costs while lowering health risks. For more information on controlling health care costs go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/businesscase/benefits/costs.html>

Below is an example of costs assessments,

a. Obesity Cost Calculator - Uses input data (average hourly wages, percent of employees receiving health benefits and BMI of employees) to calculate an estimate of the costs to an organization that are obesity-related. Default values from national datasets to calculate the cost estimates can be used. <http://www.cdc.gov/leanworks/costcalculator/>

5. Maximize financial and other program resources- The budgets for wellness programs vary. If the budget is small, an assessment can identify less obvious resources, such as talented staff willing to help. If the business has a larger budget, careful management is still warranted. Resources that the wellness program can assist in saving should be considered. The most important resource to a business is the staff. When employees miss work due to illness, the company loses resources by paying sick leave and missed work production occurs. Sick Leave Assessments review the actual absenteeism, or not showing up for work, to determine business costs. Similarly, disability claims can be used as an assessment tool for potential intervention areas. When staff are at work but are nonproductive, a drain on financial and program resources can occur. A “presenteeism” assessment measures the lost productivity cost from employees showing up for work, but who are not fully engaged or productive due to personal health and life issue distractions. Wellness programs can help staff become more productive.

Below is an example of a presenteeism assessment.

The Stanford Presenteeism Scale- This scale assesses the relationship between presenteeism, health problems and productivity for working populations. <http://managedhealthcareexecutive.modernmedicine.com/mhe/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=134250#1>

After the program is in place several months to years, a follow-up assessment is completed. The initial assessment is then compared to the follow-up assessment to determine the strengths and areas in need of improvement. It can also be used to help provide feedback to identify potential problems, increase participation, and identify new areas or strategies to try.

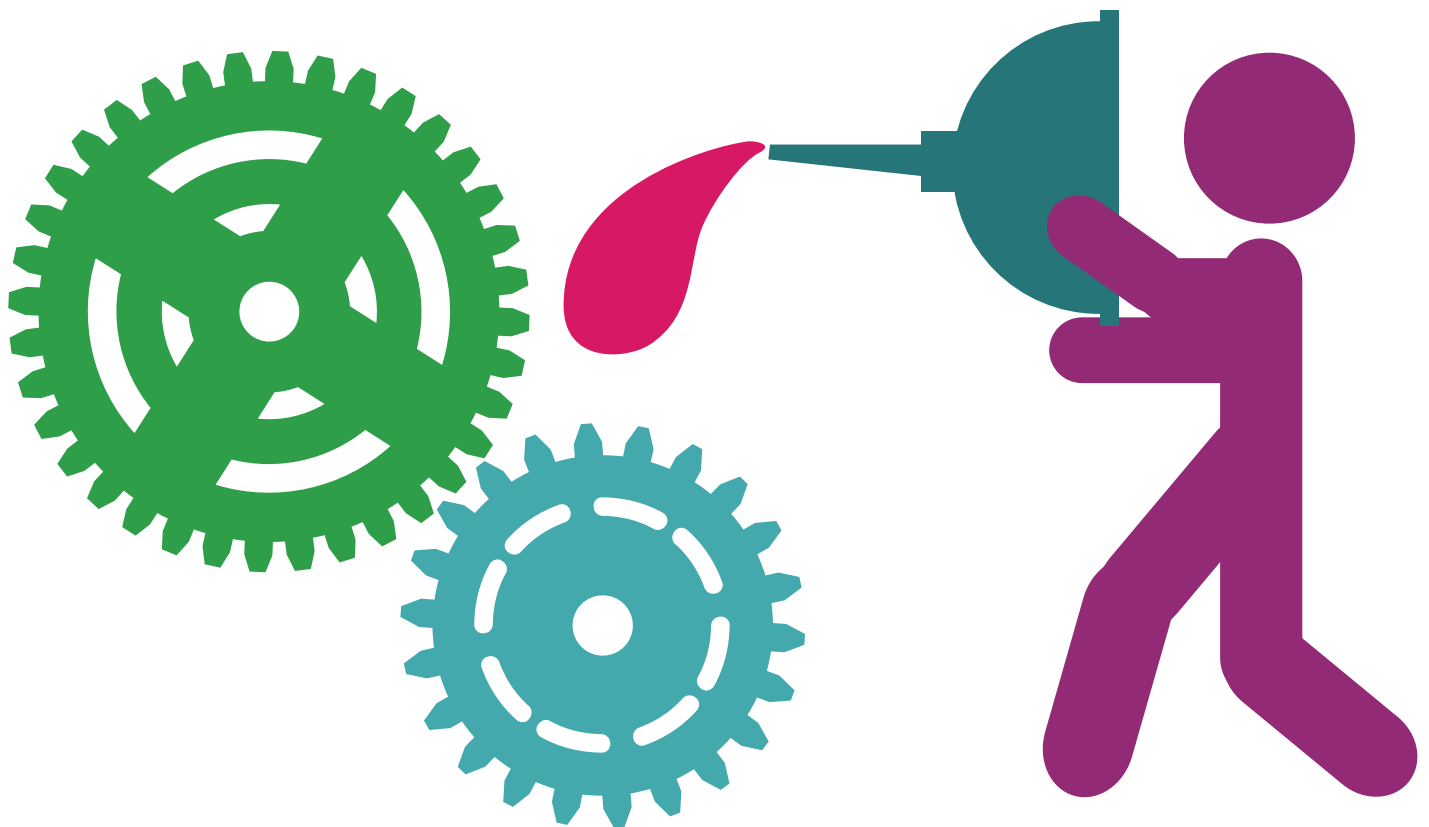
Who Does All These Assessments?

Not every assessment listed above needs to be completed. However, completion of several assessments will allow for best outcomes. Typically, if the wellness program is supported by administration, a named employee (program manager) will be responsible. If the assessments are being done to prove an interest in wellness interventions,

“wellness champions” or interested staff may want to head up the efforts.

Wellness managers often voice the need for a wellness committee. The committee and employees should be able to provide input. For more information concerning the Wellness Committee, refer to Chapter 3, Supportive Environments. Additional information about wellness committees is also found in the Strategic Alliance for Health Toolkit, Chapter 4, found at: “<http://www.adph.org/strategicalliance/assets/WorksiteWellnessWorkbookSec2.pdf>”

ALABAMA SUCCESS: Financial services company Protective Life Corporation has more than 2,300 employees nationwide. The company’s wellness staff is responsible for health programming in multiple locations across the footprint. The staff reports high participation in the Virgin HealthMiles pedometer program and, at the Birmingham corporate headquarters, the onsite fitness center. When asked what advice they would offer to businesses starting a wellness program, the response was to start small and engage employees in the program’s structure through ongoing surveys and activities. The HRA was listed as an important step to take.



CHAPTER 3 CRAFTING THE OPERATING PLAN

Essential Elements of Effective Programs

There are certain key elements or benchmarks that help to make an effective wellness program. The International Association for Worksite Health Promotion (IAWHP), an American College of Sports Medicine affiliate society, recommends the following elements be included:

- Clear wellness program mission, objectives, and goals that align with the overall objectives of the organization
- Worksite wellness leaders and champions who are engaged and located throughout the organization
- An appropriate program mix, delivery channels, and timelines that maximize the efficiency and efficacy of the program
- Marketing strategies and incentives that encourage participation and energize the program
- An ongoing evaluation that measures the

effectiveness of the individual activities and of the programs as a whole, including financial benefits and improved productivity

- Healthy employees in a supportive culture

Similarly, the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) developed WELCOA's Seven Benchmarks. These benchmarks help wellness leaders know if they are on the right track if the wellness program has

1. CEO support
2. An operating plan
3. Cohesive wellness teams
4. Data to drive health efforts
5. Appropriate interventions
6. Supportive environment
7. Documented outcomes

For more detailed information on these seven benchmarks, go to <http://www.welcoa.org/wellworkplace/index.php?category=16>

The elements and benchmarks are similar in emphasizing that wellness programs are

much more than an event or activity. As you review these points, consider what area(s) need to be addressed before moving forward in creating interventions. At this point, you should have your basic goals and objectives and used some of the suggested assessment data about your workforce and their needs.

Appropriate Intervention(s)

All interventions that you choose should be based on assessment data and realistic goals. Looking at the data you have collected, review the following:

- Assess population risk factors and demographics- By using health risk assessments (HRAs), claims analysis, and health screening results, the collected information can be used to determine the most prevalent risk factors. Be sure to consider the demographics of your employee population to determine what interventions will be most applicable based on age, and gender, and ability.
- Determine what senior management wants the wellness program to achieve- If management's goal is to achieve short-term cost savings, it may be necessary for the program to focus on self-care and disease management to decrease the utilization of intensive healthcare resources. If the goal is focused on improving employee retention and morale, corporate culture and image, and the long-term health of the workforce, a variety of programs may need to be instituted, such as stress management, child care, and fitness initiatives.
- Determine employees' expectations- Surveys and focus groups can uncover employees' interests. Aggressively promoting these programs can help to create a more positive perception of the organization.
- Determine the budget and time needed for the intervention- Interventions should be based on the available resources. If resources are scarce, it may be possible to bring in community, nonprofit and government resources. Additionally, you should work to educate employees about the resources that are available to them in the community and on the internet.

- Do your background research- Read materials such as the American Journal of Health Promotion; review web results from sites such as The Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) at www.the-hero.org; purchase a handbook such as ACSM's Worksite Health Handbook: A Guide to Building Healthy & Productive Companies (2nd Edition); investigate which interventions have been the most successful at similar businesses; and talk to wellness directors to discover interventions that have worked elsewhere.

ALABAMA SUCCESS: Originally founded in the basement of a small grocery store in Birmingham, Golden Flake Snack Foods, Inc. now serves a 12-state area in the Southeastern United States. The leaders did the math on its health investment and discovered an estimated \$35 per employee for health care and annual \$10,000 for a wellness program resulted in an immediate savings of \$12,000 in diagnostic testing. When an employee praised the program for helping her weigh less than 200 pounds for the first time in 20 years, it also became clear that it was an appreciated morale booster. The company health fair attracted a 61 percent turnout.

ALABAMA SUCCESS: Over 10 years ago, an employee at East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika asked if the organization would offer the Weight Watchers at Work© program for hospital employees. She had used Weight Watchers to successfully lose weight and wanted to help keep her momentum going and help other employees. Weight Watchers at Work© classes were started and employees are able to payroll deduct the program fees. Sessions run continuously with an average of 15-30 participants per class. Many employees have become lifetime members by achieving and maintaining their weight loss goals.

Implementation Plans

It is crucial to create a formal, written operating plan. It can provide organizational as well as individual alignment and prevent fragmentation as programs are implemented.

Budget and staff time may dictate the type of programs offered. However, the operating plan will contain information from your assessments to provide the following:

- A Vision/Mission Statement for the program that emphasizes the organization's core philosophies.
- Goals and objectives that are specific, measurable, and that align with the organization's overall strategic plan.
- A timeline for the implementation of interventions.
- Outlined roles and responsibilities for the completion of all goals and objectives.
- An itemized budget for the tools and resources needed to carry out the program.
- Effective and appropriate marketing strategies.
- Outlined evaluation procedures for measuring the goals and objectives of the program.

ALABAMA SUCCESS- In an academic, medical university in Alabama, the wellness director stated that success she is enjoying is due to the well thought out strategic plan, and expanding the plan at a realistic pace was the best way to overcome the challenges faced. The wellness director at UAB stated, "It is best to start with a strategic plan and build from the ground. Think of your wellness plan as a business proposal and execute initiatives within your capable scope and financials."

Supportive Environments

Strong senior level support is an essential part of any successful wellness program. According to the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA), the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) support can bring about more rapid change. (Reference: WELCOA's 7 Benchmarks) This support can be measured by four characteristics.

1. The CEO's communication practices regarding wellness- Having CEOs who clearly and frequently communicate a message of wellness results in more effective wellness initiatives. Communications may include written

correspondence, public addresses, and presentations, making wellness a part of the overall strategic plan of the company, and incorporating wellness into the vision or mission statement of the company.

2. The CEO's resource allocation practices- Wellness initiatives require a monetary investment in order to effectively improve employee health and reign in modifiable health care costs. An acceptable amount to allocate should be about \$100 to \$150 per employee per year. However, the return on this investment should be about \$3:1 to \$16:1 in the long term. (Reference: Ron Goetzel, Director, Cornell University Institute for Health and Productivity Studies) Staffing, programming, space, and time should all be considered when allocating resources.
3. The CEO's delegation practices- Wellness initiatives are more likely to succeed and become part of an organization's culture if formal responsibilities are delegated, rather than dependent on volunteers. Identifying one key wellness leader along with a supportive wellness committee is a great way to accomplish this. The most effective wellness committees are made up of senior level executives, middle managers, and front line employees. (See below for more information on wellness champions and committees)
4. The CEO's personal health promotion practices- When the CEO is a role model for the organization and openly exhibits good health habits, the rest of the organization is more likely to follow suit. Participating in annual health risk appraisals, receiving an annual physical exam, participating in company wellness initiatives on a regular basis, and participating in community wellness activities makes a strong role model.

In addition to the CEO, strong and visible upper management support for the Wellness Program creates a supportive environment. Administration's support encourages employees to participate in the health functions; makes it possible to secure necessary wellness program resources (staff, time, and money); and enables making the needed changes. Suggestions to obtain

support from leadership include:

- Establish a wellness program champion- In a small company, there may be a single leader who is the clear choice to be the wellness champion. In a larger company, champions with the authority to influence others are effective. The wellness program champion does not have to be the fittest member of management, but needs a disposition to be a visible and vocal supporter of workplace policies that encourage healthy behaviors. Organizations with multiple sites can consider whether it would be useful to have an executive wellness program champion at each site. Some staff time should be devoted solely to the responsibilities of the wellness program. This responsibility can be placed on company employees or contracted programs.

Although there is no specific formula for staff resources needed for a set number of employees, a general recommendation (Chapman 2007) is:

<u>Number of Employees</u>	<u>Full-time Equivalent Suggested</u>
< 25	0.1 FTE
<100	0.4 FTE
<250	0.8 FTE
<500	1.0 FTE
<1,000	1.5 FTE
<5,000	2.5 FTE
>5,000	Add staff as needed

- Find existing wellness program allies- There may already be a number of individuals within the business who recognize the value of an employee wellness program. Occupational safety, union representatives, risk management, medical officers, and human resources are logical allies. Gain their stated support for the employee wellness program. This support could include contributions of

staff time or expertise, financial resources, agreement to endorse/support policy and environmental changes, or agreement to participate in, and voice their support for changes in the workplace that will help to build a culture of wellness. These allies are important in forming a wellness committee.

- Establish a wellness committee- As noted above, the most effective wellness committees are made up of representatives from all levels. This includes senior level executives, middle managers, and front line employees. Also consider employees within all ability levels. The committee is typically more successful if employees who are interested in health promotion and supportive of the wellness concept volunteer to be on the committee instead of employees being assigned to the committee. This wellness committee represents the feelings, opinions, and ideas of the organization as a whole and symbolizes that the program belongs to the employees. During the first meeting with the committee, an overview and background to explain the concept of the wellness program and the goals of the program will help everyone have the same understanding. Wellness Committees will decide the direction of the program; will decide how often to offer programs; the diversity of the programs; and will help determine the reward system(s) used. The frequency of committee meetings is determined by the size of the program, the support of administration, and the preference of the committee, taking into consideration the work load of each volunteer. For more information on Wellness Committees refer to Strategic Health Alliance Toolkit, Chapter 4, at <http://adph.org/strategicalliance/assets/WorksiteWellnessWorkbookSec4.pdf>.
- Build a business case for the wellness program - A Wellness Program makes good business sense. Staff members with healthy behaviors, on average, are more productive when at work and incur lower medical care costs than workers with less healthy behaviors. In writing a wellness

operating plan, address several business aspects. These include the overall goal of the program, the specific objectives, the implementation strategies with a timeline, the communication methods to be used, and a detailed budget.

- Use what you know- Consider the leadership styles and the decision-making process within your company. Every company is different. Build upper management support for the wellness program in the way that makes the most sense for your company. In planning how to approach upper management for wellness program support consider:
 - What are the current priorities and pressures facing executives? How could a wellness program and a healthier workforce support those priorities?
 - How would the leaders prefer to receive data: Written documents? Verbal presentations? Electronic communications?
 - What kind of wellness program information is likely to influence decisions? Do executives want data and wellness program statistics specific to your company, or are state or national data sufficient? Are the leaders more influenced by internal factors or by what competitors are doing?
 - Who would the leaders see as a reliable messenger for this Wellness Program information? Does someone from the risk management area carry more clout than someone from the human resources area?
 - How do decisions really get made in your company? Are they made at informal committee meetings, or meetings between executives? Plan accordingly and you increase the odds that the wellness program will become a reality.

Maintaining the wellness program support once you have it is important. Regularly update the leaders on the health of the employees and the progress toward starting

a culture that encourages health. Ask upper management how often they want to receive wellness program progress reports.

Support from fellow employees is vital as well. Wellness programs are unsuccessful when there is a lack of employee interest. It is very important that every effort is made to communicate the all-encompassing benefits of the individual activities in the wellness program to the administrators and to the individuals.

Additional Ways to Create a Supportive Environment

- Giving the wellness team enough time to adequately research, plan, and promote the initiatives. Each year that the program continues, you will be able to improve upon it by refining the activities that were successful, dropping the ones that didn't work, and coming up with new activities to try.
- Turning successful activities into annual events. Continue to improve them and make them a part of the organization's culture and calendar.
- Planning an evaluation component from the start. Successful programs should track participation, satisfaction, and improvements in health status.
- Taking pictures whenever able and appropriate at wellness activities and posting them on bulletin boards or including them in newsletters and promotional materials. Videos can also be a great way to document the success of your program.
- Sharing wellness success stories in company communications such as newsletters and annual reports

ALABAMA SUCCESS: The American Cast Iron Pipe Company is a manufacturing business with over 1700 employees. When beginning their onsite health and wellness program in 1993 (WellBody), there was some initial resistance due to unfamiliarity and lack of understanding. A wellness committee was created with stakeholders - many of whom were employees. The "grassroots" approach

of the launch began with surveys to see what employees wanted. Fast-forward ten years later and their data showed that lower-risk employees had an average of \$1200 less in medical costs than higher-risk employees. Now with over 80 percent of employees participating in the voluntary screening and health-coaching program, the company has a return of investment (ROI) of 2:1. This success is attributed to moving more employees into the low-risk category and showing decreases in lost-time cases.

Communication is Key

Effective communication is necessary for the program's success and should be included in your operating plan. Consider recruiting employees who are experienced in communications and marketing to be on the wellness committee.

Additional information on communication is discussed in Chapter 4; however, communication strategies are listed below.

- Placing information in the company newsletter
- Announcing the wellness program through company-wide email
- Announcing program information at staff meetings and distributing it electronically
- Promoting monthly topics and screenings
- Providing educational/awareness training using local speakers or providers
- Placing informational posters in the hallways or common areas
- Including information in payroll envelopes
- Organizing a kick-off event or health fair as part of a larger initiative
- Ensuring diversity in the images utilized to promote the program that includes race, age, gender, cultural competence, and varied ability levels

Culture of Wellness

Building a supportive environment is essential for creating a results-oriented

wellness program. Company policies should reflect the wellness education and wellness programs that are being offered to employees. For example, if the company is providing weight management classes to employees, but the food in the cafeteria and vending machines is high in fat and low in nutrition, then long-term behavior changes are unlikely to result. Similarly, if you promote physical activity by encouraging taking the stairs, provide options, such as "move more" for individuals who cannot use the stairs.

Key areas to address in order to create a culture of wellness include:

- Increase physical activity
- Reduce tobacco use
- Promote better nutrition
- Improve workstation ergonomics
- Reduce on-the-job injuries
- Eliminate the use of alcohol and other drugs
- Manage and reduce job-related stress
- Promote participation among all employees
- Provide organizational benefits that protect and promote good health for all employees

The wellness culture of the organization should be assessed as part of your planning efforts.

Employee Behavior

Any wellness program should work to create a supportive social and physically inclusive environment where healthy choices are the norm and are easily accessible. Any wellness plan should have clearly defined expectations concerning healthy behaviors, and should also address the implementation of policies that promote health and reduce disease risk. Even when wellness programs are implemented, they must be supported by environmental and policy changes to effectively influence health habits. By influencing individual behavior at work, the organization may also be able to influence behavior outside of work. Because household culture plays a key role in whether wellness is achieved, wellness programs should also be provided to spouses

and dependents that are included in employee insurance plans. (Reference: South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. 2007. South Carolina Worksite Wellness Toolkit and Resource Guide)

Changing unhealthy behaviors can be very challenging. It is recommended that organizations take a multi-level approach to behavior change that incorporates policy, environmental, interpersonal, and individual strategies.

- Organizational Policy & Environmental Strategies
 - Change the policies, practices, and physical environment of the organization in a way that supports behavior change. For example, designating time that employees may use to work out, offering accessible fitness equipment in an on-site fitness center, creating a policy to increase healthy foods offered in worksite vending machines and cafeterias, or making the organization tobacco-free.
- Interpersonal Strategies
 - Because of the support and social identity provided by groups, targeting groups for interventions can be very effective. For example, create support groups at work that promote weight management, groups for individuals with chronic health conditions, or form walking groups.
- Individual Strategies
 - Individual behavior may be motivated to change by increasing knowledge, influencing attitudes, or challenging beliefs. For example, offer cooking classes, individual counseling, health coaching, interactive websites, etc.

Other examples of environmental and policy changes include

- Healthy guidelines for food at company meetings and events
- No smoking on company property
- Company cost-sharing for health club

- memberships
- Outdoor bike racks
- Label or highlight healthy food choices in cafeterias and vending machines
- Posters promoting healthy messages
- Areas for relaxation which can reduce stress
- Flexible hours for physical activity during the work day
- Provide an on-site exercise facility with showers and changing facilities on-site

ALABAMA SUCCESS: Regions Bank employs over 8,000 associates in Alabama and nearly 16,000 more in 15 other states. A corporate wellness program began in 2008 with a focus on health education and illness prevention. In 2009 and 2010 a monetary incentive to increase individual personal health awareness was awarded to associates who completed a health risk appraisal through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama's behealthy.com website and visited their doctor for a preventive visit and age-appropriate screenings. Along with other wellness initiatives, Regions has participated in Scale Back Alabama since its inception with over 1,000 participants each year. In October 2011 Regions started an activity-based incentive component for associates across the 16- state footprint in partnership with Virgin HealthMiles. Currently, nearly 25 percent of the population participates in the program and the number of participants continues to steadily grow. While it is still too soon to report actual ROI, Regions is very pleased with the excitement, networking, team building, and increased activity among participants in the program. Sixty-three percent (63 percent) of participants are getting at least 60 minutes of activity per week. Numerous success stories have been reported, from losing weight to reducing blood pressure and body fat to increased energy and productivity. An independent third party will be conducting a detailed claims analysis to determine actual ROI in the future. The program is very easy to administer from a coordinator standpoint. Regions supplements the promotional emails provided by Virgin with company-specific intranet articles to encourage new participants and continued excitement. Regions has also

capitalized on the HeathMiles program by offering bonus “points” for participation in other wellness activities such as Scale Back Alabama, Corporate Challenges, National Walk at Lunch Day, etc. Regions’ next step in combating the obesity problem in Alabama is to employ a dietitian to meet one-on-one with associates regarding dietary issues. The program will be piloted in Birmingham beginning fourth quarter 2012.

Evidence-Based Best Practices

It is important to make sure that the wellness program you create uses evidence-based best practices. There are a wide variety of sources to reference to assure that you use “the best of the best” when planning your program:

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has information that you can use to plan your program using best practices on the CDC Healthier Worksite Initiative page. This website provides information, resources, and step-by-step toolkits to help you improve the health of your employees. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi>
2. The Guide to Community Preventive Service website contains ideas of programs and policies helpful in the community; strategies to address sharing information, teaching educational and behavioral changes, and recommending changes in policies, environment, and systems to address specific diseases and risk factors. The specific disease states included are listed on the home page. <http://www.thecommunityguide.org>; <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/worksite/index.html>
3. The International Association for Worksite Health Promotion (IAWHP), an American College of Sports Medicine affiliate society, is focused on supporting worksite directors/champions. IAWHP offers the [International Association for Worksite Health Promotion Online Certificate](#)

Course which provides a road map for designing successful evidence-based and best practice health promotion programs. Leadership principles and strategies, operations, evaluations, and integrations are reviewed.

4. States have worksite wellness resources available on their websites. Examples are:
 - a. Texas <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wellness/worksiteresources.shtm>
 - b. Wisconsin <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/Sites/Worksitekit.htm>
 - c. North Carolina <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/index.html>
5. Contact the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability to learn how to make your wellness program inclusive to individuals with disabilities, for inclusive fitness programs, and universal design. www.nchpad.org

ALABAMA SUCCESS: East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika offers reimbursement of membership dues at its medical fitness center, HealthPlus, as a benefit for employees. To be eligible for the “Exercise Pays” program, employees must participate in an initial and follow-up fitness assessment and record their activity using an electronic FitLinxx system. There are 3 different levels of reward, depending upon the average number of minutes of physical activity they complete per week. Over the course of a year, if an employee logs an average of 150 minutes of physical activity per week, they are reimbursed 100 percent of dues. If they log an average 120 minutes per week, they are reimbursed 85 percent of their dues and if they log an average of 90 minutes per week, they receive 70 percent reimbursement. The program started in 2009 and each year over 200 employees choose to participate, with over 30 percent of participants receiving a full 100 percent payout.



SECTION III- IMPLEMENTING WELLNESS

This “how to” section provides simple steps in developing successful wellness activities. Topics include nutrition, weight management, stress management, and physical fitness. The partner manual, Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health Worksite Wellness Toolkit, is referenced and is included as an attachment in this guide.

CHAPTER 4 IMPLEMENTING AND KEEPING IT GOING STRONG

By now your wellness program has the administration support needed. A wellness champion has been designated to lead the program and a wellness committee is excited to begin. Assessments have been completed to supply the base line data. , Employee needs and wants have been determined

and prioritized. As the wellness champion, you have ideas from the evidence-based approaches to support the first activity. But before you “jump in” with the activity you may want to assess the readiness of the employees to implement changes in their health or wellness related behaviors. If the assessments used in designing the wellness program contained readiness to change questions, you will have this information. However, it is important to note that employees may move back and forth in the stages of readiness. The employee needs to be “met where he is” and even small steps towards healthier lifestyles need to be encouraged.

There are websites in the reference chapter that offer suggestions for implementing a health and wellness program. One common factor suggested in these sites is effective communication.

As you implement a workplace wellness program and offer intervention activities effective communication is vital. Numerous

opportunities exist for wellness programs to interact with employees and provide intriguing, pertinent information. As noted in Chapter 3 there are various ways to communicate with employees or market its programs are as follows:

- Email
- Social media options such as Facebook or Twitter
- Lunch-and-Learn programs with selected speakers
- Podcasts
- Blogs written by program participants or special guests
- Hotline numbers
- Newsletters-online or physical
- Bulletin boards-online or print
- Poster boards
- Chat rooms online
- One-on-One or group meetings with wellness advisor
- Participation of others, especially company leaders
- Healthy workplace concepts coordinated with the company vision statement
- Workplace community events
- Alternative formats including large print

It is important to note the power of social media; however, always refer to the company's policies regarding the use of social media. There are several websites that provide tools to help establish social media approaches. A sample of those sites includes:

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/ToolsTemplates/SocialM>

http://www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Tools/Twitter.html#mediaToolkit_BM.pdf

<http://www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Tools/guidelines/pdf/ecards.pdf>

<http://www.values.com/search/index?search=motivation&x=25&y=15> <http://www.values.com/teaching-value>

<http://www.eatsmartmovemoreenc.com>

MAINTAIN INTEREST

Just as bad habits require time to break; good habits require time to develop. If a person can consistently participate in a program or activity over a six-week period, he or she is more likely to continue that behavior. At six months, participants may become bored or distracted. Helping your employees stay engaged throughout several weather or holiday seasons will enhance their chances of adopting the health change for life. The way the activity is designed will affect total participation and outcome. The points below are used to sustain employee interest and participation.

• Setting Goals

It is important that employees learn to set realistic and achievable, yet challenging, goals. In a statement from the American Heart Association (AHA), researchers recommend goal-setting and establishing a plan for follow-up among the most important components of successful and durable lifestyle interventions. Goals that are specifically outlined, that are measureable, realistic for a specific time frame, and have some type of reward identified are the most useful in wellness programs.

Goals can be set by an individual or with a team; the important factor is they are realistic and achievable. If not, the employee can be set up for failure. Information on health behavior changes can be found at the following:

<http://www.cdc.gov/leanworks/build/behavioral.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/growingstronger/motivation/index.html>

<http://www.slideshare.net/confirm/MzI0MjcwMjM7cmViZWm=/5195813-7710e353d261fb566bc9f394f6357bb71073884c-slideshow>

<http://behaviorgrid.org>

• Utilizing Peer Support (Partners, Groups, Teams)

Establishing a buddy system can make engaging in healthy behaviors more fun and productive. A program can establish social media buddies through the use of health and wellness, nutrition, or fitness apps or blogs or through more personal approaches of

partners, groups, or teams. Partners, teams, and group selection works best when similar values or goals are held by the team members. The peer support provided from these groups encourages accountability. Many wellness programs have found that the commitment to the team or something bigger than themselves provides the team members with stronger incentives.

ALABAMA SUCCESS: Scale Back Alabama is a public awareness campaign for adults hosted by Alabama’s hospitals and the Alabama Department of Public Health, with support from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. The purpose of the 10-week contest is to encourage adult Alabamians to lose weight, to exercise, and to have fun while doing it. Scale Back Alabama, as a social marketing campaign, has been successful in leading participants to lose weight and affect lifestyle changes. The data reveals that interactions among team members are related to the successful modification of behaviors associated with weight loss. As the propositions derived from the findings suggest, social marketers should consider the role of human interactions, as driving and restraining forces, in designing more effective social-marketing campaigns targeting behavioral change” (Reference: Forbus, R., Synder, J.L. Social Interaction and Employee Health. The Journal of Business Management and Change. Volume 6. Issue 1)

- **Including Competition**

Competition is a known motivator for many but not all employees. Some employees are more comfortable with campaign concepts

- than true competition. Employees can access a variety of websites or apps that will allow them to compete with themselves or others. They can receive incentives in various forms including those that provide support to others. Examples of websites that use competition are in Chapter 7.

- **Using Tracking Forms**

Interactive feedback, videos, and tracking information are methods to document successes and need of improvement. An individual can chart or graph his progress for review using quantified informatics programs with some applications. Examples are as follows as well as listed in Chapter 7.

www.healthfinder.gov

www.myfitnesspal.com

- Remember to regularly assess the value of your program and its attributes in regards to the viewpoint of the employee when looking for ways to improve or continue participation. Key points to review include the degree that a program

- Fulfills and addresses the needs of the employee
- Allows for individual adaptation including measuring distance not just steps
- Improves employees’ skills and abilities to select healthy lifestyle choices
- Provide opportunity to contribute to a purpose

More information on assessing the value of the program is found in Chapter 6, Evaluation.



CHAPTER 5

What Are Incentives

Wellness incentives are tangible and intangible rewards beyond an employee's paycheck and benefits. Incentives should encourage wellness program participants to adopt and maintain positive, healthy behaviors. They can be used to increase participation, aid in completion or attendance at programs, and help individuals change or adhere to healthful behaviors. Wellness incentives are effective because people often require extra motivation to become committed to their health. The incentives provide extrinsic motivation to participate in the program, rewarding individuals for taking good care of themselves.

Wellness incentives may take the form of "carrots" or "sticks" to encourage employees to adopt healthier lifestyle habits. "Carrots" are rewards for engaging in a healthy behavior or activity; conversely, wellness "sticks" would be deterrents or penalties for individuals who are not actively seeking to reduce a risky behavior as outlined by the company. Most wellness experts in the wellness field agree that the use of carrots rather than sticks is most effective.

Why Use Wellness Incentives

Modifiable health risk factors, including nutrition, weight control, exercise, cholesterol, blood pressure, safety, and mental well-being are the main focus of wellness programs. Behaviors associated with these risk factors must be changed in order to prevent or reverse illnesses associated with them; however, changing these behaviors can be extremely difficult. The greatest challenge is that changing employees' wellness behaviors must be voluntary, and change is not always welcomed. Change requires discipline and determination within oneself. People generally do not change their behavior without considerable motivation. The rationale for using wellness incentives is to add extrinsic motivation in order to initiate and build upon employees' natural intrinsic motivation for good health. In addition, the presence of an incentive may increase the participation. WELCOA literature estimates participation increases by 10- 20 percent.

Designing Your Incentive Plan:

How to Use Incentives

A wellness incentive may be used as part of the program/activity, provided at different

times or at the end, and awarded for specific health results. Incentives can improve participation, but before selecting incentives there are considerations to make.

- Legal Aspects-

As discussed in Chapter 1, incentives offered in the form of discounts on health care premiums cannot exceed 20 percent of the total cost for health insurance. This requirement is mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

All incentives must be offered to employees who are in a similar employment classification. This means that an employer can allow full-time employees and disallow part-time and temporary employees from participation in the wellness program. Employees must be aware of participation eligibility requirements.

- Timing of Providing Incentives-

Incentives offered only at the beginning of a program do not encourage completion as much as those offered at key points throughout the program to maintain employee participation. If wellness incentives are offered based on specific health results, the wellness program must be designed properly to ensure that no employee experiences discrimination or violation of privacy.

The specific healthy behavior goals for which the incentives are offered should be chosen according to needs identified in the specific employee population. Examples of behaviors that employers might reward include:

- Completion of a health risk assessment
- Participation in program activities
 - Attendance at education seminars
 - Completion of online learning modules
 - Adherence to a prescribed regimen (exercise or nutrition guidelines)
 - Participation in specific programs such

as smoking cessation or weight loss

- Regular fitness center usage
- Measurable achievements
 - Lifestyle changes (smoking cessation or achieving a specific weight loss target). Please note caution is used for weight loss. Clear standards need to be understood, such as healthy weight loss of 1 to 2 pounds a week. Otherwise unhealthy habits can be formed or used to reach the weight loss goal.
 - Specific biometric achievements (reduction in cholesterol, weight loss, maintaining a low overall health risk score)

Alternative completion standards must be offered in addition to the general completion standards for participation in a wellness program. An example of this would be smoking cessation. Incentives for participants who attempted to quit smoking but were unsuccessful must be equivalent to the incentives offered to participants who successfully quit smoking.

- Types of Incentives Used

The wellness program must support health awareness and disease prevention. Incentives should correlate with this theme when possible. Careful consideration is needed to determine which incentive methods would be most effective and produce the highest rate of participation within the employees. Consider the following:

1. Employee Culture- Identify the culture of your staff and build your incentives accordingly. Employees could be more or less motivated to participate in a wellness program based on the incentive.
2. Cost of Incentive and Budget Allotment- The cost of the incentive must be considered. Remember, the business goal for a wellness program is to provide return on your investment by reducing absenteeism, disability, and worker's comp. For the return on investment to work, the incentive cost must be less than the anticipated savings that the program will produce. Since most

programs will take several years to develop a positive return on investment (ROI), employers should choose their incentives in such a way that the incentive cost and program cost are spread out, and the delay in return is considered.

3. Possible Unintended Negative Effect- Beware of creating negative consequences. Employers can unintentionally create a wellness program that produces behaviors contrary to the desired health promotion. Will offering cash incentives to employees who quit smoking encourage non-smokers to begin smoking simply to be eligible for the cash reward? To avoid this pitfall, carefully design the wellness program to preserve the intended message of health promotion.

The following are examples of possible incentives for your workplace:

Monetary/Discount Incentives- While monetary incentives are a good method to motivate employees to initially participate in a wellness program, if they cannot be sustained by the company, their effectiveness is lessened. It is recommended to set incentives, especially cash rewards, as low as possible in order to retain effectiveness. The theory is that while large amounts create a greater drive for the goal initially, they can also create dependency. Once the reward is removed, the new behaviors will recede if the extrinsic reward overshadows the intrinsic reward. The goal is to set the reward at an amount that will be enough to urge someone to begin a health regimen, but not so large that he or she will stop once the external stimulus is gone. Monetary incentives include:

- Discounts for health insurance premiums
- Healthy restaurant/grocery store discounts/coupons
- Health club discounts
- Personal trainer session coupons
- Exercise gadgets (pedometer, water bottle, t-shirt, gym bag, blood pressure monitor, workout videos, cookbook)

Recognition Incentives- Many incentives can be awarded at little to no cost to the employer. Being recognized can inspire employees and has proven to be a successful motivator to retain employee participation. Recognition can be in different formats, such as:

- Management recognition (certificates)
- Company wide recognition in a newsletter or bulletin

Miscellaneous Incentives- Rewards that can be given to participants may be at no cost or minimal cost to the company. Examples can include

- Casual day coupon
- Massage therapy gift
- Complimentary healthy breakfast/lunch
- Wellness tokens to be used at management discretion
- Eligibility for a raffle offering a weekend getaway
- Healthy related magazine subscription (ex: Cooking Light)

The incentives should motivate employees to set new goals in an effort to develop long lasting behavior change. Take small steps towards creating a healthier work environment by setting realistic expectations for your employees' behavior changes. Do not expect drastic changes to occur immediately after initiating the incentive; positive health behavior changes occur over time, not overnight.

ALABAMA SUCCESS: Alabama's State Employee Insurance Board (SEIB) offers an incentive which affects employees' insurance premiums. In order to receive the wellness discount, employees must either participate once per year in the free wellness screenings provided at the workplace or visit their personal physicians. If it is determined that the employee has a high-risk health condition, he or she must show proof of actively seeking to reverse the condition (<https://www.alseib.org/healthinsurance/sehip/Wellness.aspx>)



SECTION IV- SUSTAINING WELLNESS

Proving the program is successful will help sustain the program with continued support. Evaluation tools, data that can be collected, and how to use the results are shared in this section.

CHAPTER 6 EVALUATION

Creating Your Wellness Evaluation Plan

Conducting a thorough evaluation is a vital step in developing and sustaining your wellness program. Although this is listed as a final step in the Wellness Guide, your evaluation plan should be created at the beginning of the planning process. Evaluation is a systematic gathering of information and serves to increase your worksite's understanding about which elements of your program are working and which need improvement.

Conducting an evaluation helps to measure the successes and benefits of your wellness program. It can provide insight on

- Participation rates and employee satisfaction

- Changes made in the environment and culture

- Changes in employee health risks and health care cost

- It is also important to keep in mind that all evaluation methods should link back to the goals and objectives of the program.

What is the Purpose of Program Evaluation?

- Although evaluation methods vary from program to program, it can help answer the following questions:

1. Is the program being implemented as outlined in the operating plan?
2. Is the specific wellness intervention reaching the targeted population?
3. Is the program appropriately priced?
4. Is the program effective?
5. What are the costs relative to the effectiveness of the program?

6. Does the program include staff with disabilities?

Why is Evaluation Important?

According to the Wellness Council of America, a respected national wellness authority, the following are the top reasons for data collection in the evaluation process:

1. It provides a quick picture of the overall health and well-being of a workforce at any point in time.
2. It ensures an account of the overall health status of a workforce over time. This information is essential to long-term strategic planning.
3. It ensures that upper management knows what is happening in the area of employee health and wellness. This can help to increase their engagement and investment in the program.
4. It ensures transparency of the health management process. This means that the data will be available to a variety of individuals within the organization well into the future.
5. It provides accountability for the program.
6. It informs the workforce of the company's overall health and well-being. Without knowing this information, it is less likely that the workforce as a whole will be ready for change.
7. It can help increase recruitment of new employees. Surveys show that being healthy is a primary motivation of U.S. workers.
8. It allows companies to benchmark against the wellness programs of other companies. This can show how well ahead of national trends the company is performing, and can also provide motivation to improve.
9. It allows you to measure change, which will show your company's commitment to improving employee health.
10. It provides concrete proof of the value of the program.

(Reference: Hunnicutt, D. (2007). 10 Reasons Why Data Collection Is an Essential Step in Building a Results-Oriented Wellness Program. WELCOA's Absolute Advantage Magazine, 6(4), 4-9.)

What Type of Evaluation Should I Use?

Two major types of evaluations are generally used to assess wellness programs:

1. Process evaluation is used to determine why or how a program works and can help to find problems early on in your wellness program. It is the ongoing assessment and documentation of the planning, development, and implementation phases of your wellness interventions.

Examples of this type of measure include

- Program participation rates and attendance (Is the program reaching the target audience? Do they know about it? Are they participating? Are there barriers to participation?)
- Participant satisfaction (Are the participants pleased with the intervention? Would they recommend it to a co-worker?)

2. Impact evaluation (also called outcome evaluation) is used to determine whether or not a program works and helps to measure the extent to which you have met your program objectives and long-term goals. It answers whether the intervention made a difference in the lives of the employees or worksite.

Examples of impact evaluations include

- Improvements in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (Did the participants learn from the intervention? Did they change desired behavior(s)?)
- Changes in Biometric Measures like cholesterol levels, blood pressure, and Body Mass Index (Have the measures improved after a targeted intervention?)

- Risk Factors (Did at-risk individuals lower their risk factors as a result of the intervention? Did low-risk individuals remain in the low-risk category? Did the total number of employees in the high-risk category decrease?)
- Physical Environment and Corporate Culture (Is there a perceived change in the corporate culture to support wellness? Does the physical environment support wellness interventions?)
- Productivity (Have absenteeism rates decreased? Has employee morale improved? Has the worksite reduced turnover rates?)
- Return on Investment (Did the worksite save money compared to what was spent on the wellness program?)

Many factors will go into your decision about what type of evaluation should be used to assess your program. Deciding on the type of evaluation is often based on program resources available and the type of documentation needed to show success in reaching outlined goals.

A return on investment is the monetary benefit (savings) associated with a program, divided by the cost of the program. It is usually expressed as a ratio (ex. for every \$1.00 spent on the program, a cost savings of \$4.40 was realized). Evaluating this measure allows a company to estimate prospectively or retrospectively how much it will save (or expect to save) compared to how much you (expect to) spend or spent. This type of evaluation can be quite costly and can often be difficult to measure, but is very beneficial to know. CDC's Obesity Cost Calculator is an easy-to-use tool that can help figure out an estimate of the obesity related costs to your organization, and compare the costs and benefits of certain obesity prevention and control interventions. The cost calculator is available at this link: <http://www.cdc.gov/leanworks/assess/roi.html>

What Tools Can Be Used to Gather Data

A variety of tools can be used to gather data. The tools selected will be based on the type of evaluation you select. A more comprehensive discussion of these tools can be found in the Guide's section on Assessment. Some examples of data gathering tools include:

- Program registration sheets
- Participant satisfaction surveys
- Self-reported behavior surveys
- Health Risk Appraisal (HRA) results, biometric testing, and screening results
- Productivity questionnaires

By utilizing the evaluation strategies that have been outlined, your organization has the potential to ensure the success of your worksite wellness program. Evaluation data can be used to track the progress and effectiveness of your program, and can help you to identify areas that need improvement. And remember, it is important to communicate and share successful results with upper management and employees.

ALABAMA SUCCESS: The State Employees' Insurance Board nurse offers the following tips. "Remember, it is not your job to diagnose or treat a disease. Through your wellness program you are trying to change behaviors. Those improved lifestyle changes will work to reduce health risks. Start small and be realistic in what you offer. As you offer interventions, don't overlook the importance of stress reduction activities in a wellness program. Often programs are centered on eating and exercise. While these are important, remember that stress will affect the physical and mental health of employees. It is true that eating better and physical activity can reduce stress, but laughter is important too. In making your wellness program fun, you will help make it successful."



SECTION V- WELLNESS RESOURCES

This section provides references and resources to help with the worksite wellness programs offered. Additional wellness manuals, sites to address legal issues, trends of health coaching versus program leaders, and general references are provided.

CHAPTER 7

RESOURCES, POLICY EXAMPLES, AND REFERENCES

The Internet contains an unlimited amount of health information. Links do not constitute an endorsement of any kind. The Obesity Task Force is not responsible for the content of Web pages found.

1. RESOURCES

A. Specific Interventions

- i. Breastfeeding- The Business Case for Breastfeeding is a comprehensive program designed to educate employers about the value of supporting breastfeeding employees in the workplace. <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/government-in-action/business-case-for-breastfeeding/>
- ii. Family Planning- PLAN first Hotline is a toll-free family planning information line. (888) 737-2083 <http://www.adph.org/familyplanning>
- iii. Financial Programs- IntegriTime provides a worksite financial education program that includes the negative impact financial stress has on the employee and the business. <http://www.integritime.com/Services/WorksiteFinancialEducation.aspx>
- iv. Injury Prevention- Alabama Department of Public Health provides information on safe smoke alarm procedures, fire safety, bicycle safety, seat belt usage, falls for the elderly, suicide prevention, and sexual assault/rape prevention. <http://adph.org/injuryprevention/>
- v. Immunizations (Flu Shots)-

- 1) The Immunization Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health provides educational materials aimed to stop the spread of diseases that are vaccine preventable. <http://adph.org/Immunization>
- 2) The DO 10 program of the Alabama Department of Public Health provides materials with ten things you can do to fight the flu. <http://www.adph.org/pandemicflu/index.asp?ID=744>
- vi. Maternity- Healthy Beginnings is a toll-free pregnancy information and referral line that includes substance abuse treatment and resources for pregnant women. 1 (800) 654-1385
- vii. Workplace Safety and Health
 - 1) The Center for Disease Control and Prevention provides worksite safety information including hazards and exposures, diseases and injuries, safety, and emergency preparedness. <http://cdc.gov/niosh/topics>
 - 2) Total Worker Health is an occupational safety and health protection program with an emphasis in health promotion to help prevent worker injury and illness and advance overall health and well-being. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/TWH/totalhealth.html>
- viii. Stress Reduction- This worksite program provides strategies for handling stress, reducing problems, abusive drinking habits, and psychological symptoms. <http://www.innovations.ahrq.gov/content.aspx?id=2882>
- ix. Tobacco Free
 - 1) American Cancer Society: This is a quit smoking-cessation program with testimonials, support, and financial benefits. <https://www.quitnow.net/Program/>
 - 2) Quit Smoking- This is a step-by-step guide to quit smoking along with additional support and related links. <http://www.smokefree.gov/default.aspx>
- 3) The Alabama Tobacco Quit Line
 - a. This program offers materials to those interested in tobacco cessation or to those who know someone who needs to quit.
 - b. Information, referrals and counseling are confidential, and counseling sessions are designed on a schedule that is convenient to the caller.
 - a) 1 (800) QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669)
 - b) <http://www.alabamquitnow.com>
- 4) Action on Smoking and Health- This program works to prohibit cigarette commercials and also ban smoking on planes, buses, and many public places. It also works to lower insurance premiums for nonsmokers. <http://ash.org/>
- x. Walking/Rolling Program
 - 1) American Heart Association- This is a walking program with tools such as map routes, access to local walking paths, and facts on the benefits of walking. <http://startwalkingnow.org>
 - 2) America on the Move- This is dedicated to help others take small steps and make small lifestyle changes for a healthier way of life. <https://aom3.americaonthemove.org/default.aspx>
 - 3) Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama- WalkingWorks program is designed to help members of the community incorporate physical activity into their daily lives, includes online tools and trackers. www.walkingworks.com
 - 4) NCHPAD 14 Weeks to a Healthier You- This 14 week web based physical activity and health promotion program is tailored to all ability levels. www.nchpad.org

org/14weeks

- xi. Kaiser Permanente- This program assists individuals to use pedometers to motivate and track walking progress toward completing 10k steps a day. <http://kp.10k-steps.com> (NOTE: A pedometer is a small device that calculates the distance a person runs or walks. Some pedometers, such as a Yamax SW200 pedometer, measures movement to covert to distance which may be beneficial for wheelchairs.)
- xii. Weight loss
 - 1) Lean Works- CDC has resources to help you plan, build, promote, and assess your obesity prevention and control program. <http://www.cdc.gov/leanworks/resources/tools.html>
 - 2) Weight Watchers At Work- Learn the benefits of and how to bring Weight Watchers to your office. <http://www.weightwatchers.com/about/cpp/index.aspx>
 - 3) Scale Back Alabama- This is a statewide campaign held the first of each year to encourage Alabamians to get healthier by losing weight and exercising. <http://www.scalebackalabama.com/>

B. General Health Information

- i. National Health Observances- Calendars list various health awareness weeks and months throughout the year. <http://healthfinder.gov/nho/nho.asp>
- ii. Men's Health- The purpose of this page is to provide educational materials and resources to those seeking ways to improve men's health. <http://adph.org/menshealth/>
- iii. Minority Health Resources- Disease information that affects minority groups (African American, Asian, and Latino) is provided. Information includes CVD, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, high blood pressure, and stroke. <http://adph.org/minorityhealth/>
- iv. Women's Health- The Alabama Legislature Act 2002-141 created

The Office of Women's Health in the Alabama Department of Public Health to be an advocate for women's health issues. <http://adph.org/owh>

1) New Leaf... Choices for Healthy Living

- a. This is a structured nutrition, physical activity, and assessment program for chronic disease risk-reduction through weight reduction and healthy lifestyle promotion. <http://adph.org/owh/Default.asp?id=1022>
- v. Emergency Preparedness- Get 10 contains information appropriate for the individual or worksite on the 10 essential items need for an emergency. <http://www.adph.org/get10/>
- vi. General Wellness Programs Research Articles- The Research Compendium: The NIOSH Total Worker Health Program: Seminal Research Papers 2012. These papers established the rationale for expanding research on the benefits of integrated programs to improve the health of workers and workplaces. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2012-146>
- vii. U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services. This site provides an A-Z health encyclopedia, many interactive tools to check your health, personalized advice, and lets you keep track of your progress. <http://www.healthfinder.gov/default.aspx>
- viii. Prevention Institute- This organization promotes primary prevention practice policies, organizational practices, and collaborative efforts that improve health and total quality of life. <http://www.preventioninstitute.org>
- ix. Global Employee Health and Fitness Month- The goal to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle to employers and their employees through worksite health promotion activities and environments is presented. <http://www.healthandfitnessmonth.com/about>

- x. Fruits & Veggies–More Matters- Practical tips on consuming more fruits and veggies, preparing fruits and veggies recipes, and maintaining balance in the food eaten is provided. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>

C. Disease Specific

- i. Asthma
Information on risk factors, triggers, symptoms, diagnosis, and preventable measures of asthma is provided. <http://www.adph.org/asthma>
- ii. Cancer
 - 1) Cancer Registry
 - a. This site provides information on trends in cancer incidence, identification of at risk populations, and promotes cancer prevention. http://www.adph.org/cancer_registry/
 - 2) Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program
 - a. Free breast and cervical cancer screening is provided to women age 40-64 who are uninsured or underinsured and whose income is at or below 200 percent of poverty level. For more information call toll free 1 (877) 252-3324. <http://www.adph.org/earlydetection/>
 - 3) ARTICLE– A Model for Worksite Cancer Prevention: Integration of Health Protection and Health Promotion in the Well Works Project. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10155659>
- iii. Diabetes at Work- This program provides lesson plans and other resources for people with or working with others who have diabetes. <http://www.diabetesatwork.org/NextSteps/LessonPlans.cfm>
- iv. Heart Health: The Heart Truth Campaign- This campaign joins its partners in sharing information, tools, and tips to help manage blood pressure. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>

[educational/hearttruth](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth)

- v. Osteoporosis- The link identifies osteoporosis as a real health concern, provides recommendations, health screening information, and provides additional links to other agencies. http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/resources/preventative_screening.htm
- vi. HIV/AIDS- The Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control provides guidance to reduce the incidence of HIV infections, to increase life expectancy for those infected, and to improve the quality of life for persons living with or affected by HIV. <http://www.adph.org/aids/>

D. Tool Kits

- i. Healthier Worksite Initiative- The toolkits are divided into the four pillars of the President’s Healthier US Executive Order. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/index.htm>
- ii. Worksite Program California Fit Business Kit!- Tools and resources to help employers develop and implement an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity among workers are provided. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/pages/worksitefitbusinesskit.aspx>

2. POLICY SUGGESTIONS

A. Overview of Policies

This website contains specific policies that impact health promotion at federal workplaces. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/policy/index.htm>

B. Creating a Wellness Culture

The Center for Health Improvement focuses its worksite wellness projects on proven, cost-effective health promotion programs and benefits to improve employee health while simultaneously reducing employer costs. <http://www.chipolicy.org/doc.asp?id=5463>

C. Healthy Vending

Alabama Healthy Vending Machine Program (AHVMP) website provides worksites directions for successfully implementing the Healthy Vending Machine Policy. The site provides Guidelines for Successful Healthy Vending Machines in Alabama, a general fact sheet that can be used as a marketing tool, healthy snack criteria standards, and an approved snack list with products available to vendors in Alabama. <http://www.adph.org/NUTRITION/index.asp?id=4929>

D. Tobacco Free

- i. Model Policy Language (CDC) for creating smoke-free areas is provided. <http://www.cdc.gov/CommunitiesPuttingPreventiontoWork/resources/tobacco.htm>
- ii. Developing Tobacco Free Policies is a site that assists program and agency administrators in developing tobacco-free policies that comply with the Part 856 regulation. [http://www.tobaccorecovery.org/media/files/resources/administrators/Developing percent20Tobacco-Free percent20Policies.pdf](http://www.tobaccorecovery.org/media/files/resources/administrators/Developing%20Tobacco-Free%20Policies.pdf)

E. Catered Meals

University of Minnesota: Guidelines for Healthy Catered Meals. http://www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc_content/Colleges/SPH/sph_news/Nutrition.pdf

F. Hosting Healthy Meetings

Hosting meetings designed to promote health values is reviewed in the booklet "Meeting, Eating and Physical Activity." <http://www.adph.org/NUTRITION/Default.asp?id=818>

3. GENERAL REFERENCES

A. American Heart Association

This secure site can track and manage heart health, record data, access information and resources on how to be heart healthy, and even share results with a provider. <https://www.heart360.org/Default.aspx>

B. American Cancer Society

Information about cancer, staying healthy,

finding treatment, exploring research and support is provided. <http://www.cancer.org/>

C. American Diabetes Association

Provides facts and information about living with diabetes. <http://www.diabetes.org>

D. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama provides a comprehensive health information website to members including a health assessment, personal health record, health trackers, and online behavior change program. <http://www.behealthy.com>

E. National Diabetes Education Program

This program is a result of a partnership between National Institute of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which provides information on diabetes for families, communities, those at risk, and those living with diabetes. <http://www.ndep.nih.gov>

F. Prevent Disease

A library of articles, blogs, and tools (BMI, calorie calculator, etc) to promote a healthy lifestyle is provided. http://www.preventdisease.com/worksites_wellness/worksites_wellness.shtml

G. Obesity Society

The Obesity Society is committed to encouraging research on the causes and treatment of obesity, and to keeping the medical community and public informed of new advances. <http://www.obesity.org>

H. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

ARTICLE – Improving Population Health: The Business Community Imperative- Information on the economic effect of poor population health is needed to engage the business community in population health improvement. http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2010/nov/10_0086.htm

I. Obesity Alliance

The Obesity Alliance provides strategies to overcome and prevent obesity. <http://www.stopobesityalliance.org/research-and-policy/research-center/gw-research/>

J. Community Preventative Services

This site provides resources for evidence-based recommendations and findings about what works to improve public health. <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/worksites/index.html>

K. Healthy People 2020

The 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans is explained. <http://healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/default.aspx>

L. Center for Universal Design

National information and technical assistance is available for universal designs to promote accessibility. <http://www.ncsu.edu/project/design-projects/udi/>

4. ASSESSMENTS

A. Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluations (CHANGE)

This program evaluates strengths, gaps, and weaknesses in different sectors of a community. Community sectors include: community (at-large), community-based institutions, health care, school, and worksite. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/change.htm>

B. The Stanford Presenteeism Scale

The scale explains and assesses the relationship between presenteeism, health problems, and productivity for working populations. <http://managedhealthcareexecutive.modernmedicine.com/mhe/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=134250#1>

5. INCENTIVES

A. Get Rewarded for Exercising

This program links services like Nike Plus™, Run Keeper™, Fitbit™ and many more to get points and earn prizes and gift cards. <http://www.earndit.com>

B. Understanding Wellness Incentives

A WELCOA expert covers topics including effective incentives, tax-advantaged programs, most popular incentives, cash incentives, and maintaining honesty.

http://www.welcoa.org/frontdownload/Chapman_Incentive_INTERVIEW.pdf

C. Wellness Incentives: How Well Do They Work?

Using incentives to reach a lifestyle change is discussed. <http://corporatwellnessincentives.com/health-promotion-incentives-how-well-do-they-work/>

D. Focus on Stress Reduction

The Focus on Stress Reduction program discusses the advantages of stress reduction. <http://employeeewellnessincentive.com/>

E. Journal of Deferred Compensation

Learn how to create health promotion incentives that motivate lifestyle changes and improve the health of individuals and the employee population as a whole. http://www.ninestones.com/barry/articles/incentives_hall.pdf

F. Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

This study offers empirical evidence to help employers increase their employees' participation in health risk assessments. http://beta.acoem.org/uploadedFiles/Career_Development/Tools_for_Occ_Health_Professional/Health_and_Productivity/Incentives_percent20and_percent20Other_percent20Factors_percent20Associated_percent20with_percent20Employees_percent20Participation_percent20in_percent20Health_percent20Risk_percent20Assessments.pdf

G. Wisconsin Medical Journal

Quad/Graphics hopes that by linking employee incentives, focused wellness programs, and primary care services will result in long-term health improvements and reduction in medical costs related to obesity. http://www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org/WMS/publications/wmj/issues/wmj_v104n5/Helwig.pdf

H. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority partnered with Healthier Austin to create a worksite wellness program

that has resulted in decreased employee health care costs and absenteeism. http://www.cdc.gov/Pcd/issues/2009/apr/pdf/08_0206.pdf

I. Workforce

More employers are hitting workers in the pocketbook by adopting financial penalties to curb risky health behaviors such as smoking or, conversely, using incentives to encourage healthy habits like losing weight. <http://www.workforce.com/section/benefits-compensation/feature/special-report-health-benefits-butting-in/>

J. Harvard School of Public Health, Employer Health Incentives

Learn how employee wellness programs are prodding workers to adopt healthy lifestyles. <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hphr/winter-2009/winter09healthincentives.html>

K. Managed Healthcare Executive: Is Wellness

Incentive Money Well Spent? Guidelines and actual employer experiences in maximizing the impact of worksite wellness programs. <http://managedhealthcareexecutive.modernmedicine.com/mhe/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=134604>

L. Alabama Wellness Premium Discount Program

Alabama state government agencies seek to link health behaviors to insurance premium levels paid by employees. http://www.gken.org/Synopses/CI_10005.pdf

6. GENERAL WELLNESS PROGRAMS

A. Total Worker Health

This pdf is a guide for employers and employer-employee partnerships wishing to establish effective workplace programs that sustain and improve worker health. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/TWH/essentials.html#imp>

B. North Carolina's State Health Plan

Establishes a model worksite program to guide development of the worksite wellness policy and pilot wellness interventions. http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2011/mar/10_0069.htm

C. International Association for Worksite Health Promotion

Supports those who apply themselves to promoting health at the worksite and provides a rich set of ever-growing resources and services. <http://www.acsm-iawhp.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1>

D. WELCOA

Dedicated to improving the health and well-being of all working Americans by promoting corporate membership, producing publications, conducting trainings, and creating resources. <http://welcoa.org/>

E. World Health Organization

The World Health Organization promotes improving the working conditions globally and other focuses on other aspects of environmental hygiene. http://www.who.int/occupational_health/en/

F. Global Employee Health and Fitness Month

The National Association for Health & Fitness and ACTIVE Life created this observance to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle to employers and their employees through worksite health promotion activities and environments. www.healthandfitnessmonth.com

G. American Journal of Health Promotion

Seeks to reduce the gap between health promotion research and practice by delivering the most current and relevant research in the field while addressing its practical application. <http://www.healthpromotionjournal.com/index.html>

H. National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity

Strives to unite the strengths of public, private, and industry efforts into collaborative partnerships that inspire and empower all Americans to lead more physically active lifestyles. <http://www.ncppa.org/?zbrandid=399&zidType=CH&zid=5162237&zsubscriberId=73780016&zbdom=http://www.informz.net>

I. Partnership for Healthier America

Devoted to working with the private sector to ensure the health of our nation's youth

by bringing together public, private, and nonprofit leaders to broker meaningful commitments and develop strategies to end childhood obesity. <http://www.ahhealthieramerica.org>

J. Human Resources Institute

Develops training systems, books, and other resources that make it possible to have a large and positive impact with fewer employees. <http://www.healthyculture.com/>

K. CDC Healthier Worksite Initiative

Addresses workforce health promotion with well-constructed and well-run programs to reduce costs to the employer and improve employee health and morale. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi>

L. Trust for America's Health, F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future

This article provides recommendations that focus on a number of important considerations for implementation on how to fight back obesity. <http://media.al.com/spotnews/other/Obesity2010Report.pdf>

M. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

This foundation is devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans; the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful, and timely change. <http://www.rwjf.org>

N. National Wellness Institute

Provides health promotion and wellness professionals with unparalleled resources and services that fuel professional and personal growth. <http://www.nationalwellness.org>

O. Infinite Wellness Solutions

Wellness consultants help organizations find the wellness programs that will best fit the needs of their particular population. <http://www.infinitewellnesssolutions.com>

P. Corporate Wellness Advisor

Internet resource offering information on initiating, administering, and funding wellness initiatives in a corporate environment. <http://corporatewellnessadvisor.com>

7. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Harvard Health

Provides current health information drawing on the expertise of the faculty physicians at Harvard Medical School. <http://www.health.harvard.edu/>

B. Health Fair Planning Guide

This outlines steps for planning a health fair. <http://corporate-health-and-wellness.com/health-fair-planning-guide/>

C. Marketing Ideas for Wellness business

Focuses on helping find the best wellness business growth strategies and wellness marketing techniques to expand health and wellness businesses. <http://www.radialgroup.com/>

D. American Planning Association

An online public forum centered on planning and community health. <http://planninghealthycommunities.webs.com/>

E. Families USA

This check list style fact sheet reviews components for building a workplace wellness program that promotes health and well-being while also protecting participants' health coverage and privacy. <http://familiesusa2.org/assets/pdfs/Wellness-Programs-Profiles.pdf>

8. STATE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

A. Alabama's Strategic Alliance for Health Program (2008-2013)

This program focuses on creating healthier communities in the West Alabama area. <http://www.adph.org/strategicalliance>

B. Tennessee Statewide Faith-Based Initiative

This initiative supports Healthy People 2010's goals of increasing quality and years of life by improving health information access to address identified health issues that disproportionately affect minorities. <http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/outreach/outreachchrisproject.html>

C. Rochester, MN – Healthy Living Rochester

Healthy Living Rochester is aimed at improving the heart health of people who live in Olmsted County, Minnesota. <http://>

www.healthylivingrochester.org

D. Washington State – Health Education Resource

An online clearinghouse of many resources such as public health education and health promotion materials, projects, people, events, and resources for the people in the State of Washington. <http://here.doh.wa.gov>

E. Arkansas – Lifestage Health

Lifestage Health is a program that empowers individuals and communities to focus on preventive health measures all through the stages of life. <http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programsServices/lifestageHealth/Pages/default.aspx>

F. North Carolina – Work Well NC

This website promotes increased opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity at the worksite. <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com>

G. Massachusetts – Mass in Motion

The Mass in Motion website has information dedicated to encourage and assist both employees and employers to take steps to create an environment that helps them eat better and move more. <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/wellness/healthy-living/mass-in-motion-english.html>

H. Wisconsin – Worksite Wellness Resource Kit

This toolkit assists worksites with implementing strategies that have been proven to be effective. <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/Sites/Worksitekit.htm>

9. INTERACTIVE WEBSITES

Websites can provide interactive feedback, videos, and tracking information. An individual can chart or graph his progress for review using quantified informatics programs with some applications. Examples are as follows:

- i. A health encyclopedia is provided in English and Spanish. It provides a doctor/health center finder and contains guides for nutrition, physical activity, cancer, pregnancy, diabetes, and wellness. <http://www.healthfinder.gov>

- ii. This mobile application counts calories, tracks food, and calculates BMI & BMR. <http://www.myfitnesspal.com>
- iii. This website tracks food and provides diet guidelines with sample menus. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>
- iv. A free membership to this website provides access to many different weight loss resources such as tracking personal weight and food eating patterns, providing disease state specific information, offering on line chats and forums, and offering an “Ask an Expert” section. <http://www.medhelp.org>, http://www.medhelp.org/health_tools
- v. BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama provides information on common symptoms, provides current health news, calculates BMI and heart rate, and provides a medical encyclopedia. <http://www.behealthy.com>
- vi. The walking program from BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama tracks progress made, offers motivation tips, and provides strategies to increase walking time and distance. <https://www.bcbsal.org/walkingworks>
- vii. The United States Department of Agriculture provides health information including but not limited to the Dietary Guidelines, food composition, menu databases, SNAP-Ed connections, and professional development tools. <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm> and <http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/>
- vii. By entering a specific Alabama zip code, activities in that area of the state are featured on the Active website. Exercise guides, lists local camp grounds, and lifestyle resources are also provided. <http://www.active.com>
- vii. GE created a website to gather, share, and discuss healthy ideas in an application where health goals are posted online. The application guides the user to select a healthy challenge, invite friends, and monitor progress made. <http://www.healthymagination.com/>

The Alabama Obesity Task Force would like to acknowledge those who assisted in compiling this guideline.

Allison Drake 334-756-169	adrake@lanierhospital.com	Lanier Hospital 4800 48th Street, Valley, AL 36854
Amy Rauworth 205-313-7487	amyr@lakeshore.org	National Center on Health, Physical Activity and and Disability 4000 Ridgeway Drive Birmingham, Alabama 35209
Caroline Bundy 205-801-7212	cbundy@ymcabham.org	YMCA of Birmingham 2101 Fourth Avenue North Birmingham, AL 35203
Connie Blair 334-353-7283	Connie.blair@mh.alabama.gov	Alabama Department of Mental Health 100 N. Union Street PO Box 301410 Montgomery, AL 36130-1410
Fred Gilbert 205-313-7479	fredg@uab.edu	DRRP Graduate Assistant Lakeshore Foundation 4000 Ridgeway Drive Birmingham, AL 35209
Gina Mabrey 256-393-8730	gmabrey@jsu.edu	Jacksonville State University 700 Pelham Road North Jacksonville, AL 36265-1602
Jen Remick 205-313-7417	jenr@lakeshore.org	Lakeshore Foundation 4000 Ridgeway Drive Birmingham, AL 35209
Jennifer Ropa 205-475-5439	Jennifer.anne@mac.com	Once Upon A Coupon 100 Stone Hill Circle Pelham, AL 35124
Kathe Briggs 334-528-6806	Kathe.briggs@eamc.org	East Alabama Medical Center 2000 Pepperell Pkwy, Opelika AL 36801
Kathy Shuleva 205-220-6683	kshuleva@bcbsal.org	Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama 450 Riverchase Parkway East Birmingham, AL 35244
Laurie Eldridge- Auffant 334-206-5651	laurie.eldridge-auffant@adph.state.al.us	Alabama Department of Public Health 201 Monroe St, Ste 710 Montgomery, AL 36104
Leslie Knox 334-206-5030	Leslie.knox@adph.state.al.us	Alabama Department of Public Health 201 Monroe St, Ste 1274L Montgomery, AL 36103
Mim Gaines 334-206-5649	Mim.Gaines@adph.state.al.us	Alabama Department of Public Health RSA Tower, Suite 1010 P.O. Box 303017 Montgomery, AL 36130
Rebecca Horne Sterling 256-658-9960 256-518-9530	rebecca@healthsterling.com	Sterling Health 409 Saint Clair Ave, Suite A Huntsville, AL 35801
Rebecca Kelly 205-348-0077	rkelly@ua.edu	University of Alabama 319 Russell Hall Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

WELLNESS PROGRAM GUIDE - EVALUATION

Please help us to evaluate the Program Guide and plan for future updates by rating the following:

	5 = Excellent			1 = Poor			
1. Ease of access via the internet	5	4	3	2	1	N/A	
2. Ease of access in hard copy	5	4	3	2	1	N/A	
3. Usefulness of the content	5	4	3	2	1	N/A	
4. Content relevance to your specific needs	5	4	3	2	1	N/A	
5. Amount of new information	5	4	3	2	1	N/A	
6. How did you hear about the Wellness Program Guide?	_____						

7. What information is missing and should be included in updates to the Wellness Program Guide?

8. Additional comments: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Thank you!

Please email completed evaluation to Kathe.briggs@eamc.org or fax to 334-528-3269

Wellness programs create a healthy work environment and support healthy lifestyle choices. Integrating workforce wellness into a corporate culture aids employees in achieving work/life balance and assists them in living fulfilling, satisfying lives. These factors contribute to increasing employee morale.



ALABAMA

OBESITY

TASK FORCE