



INNOVATION IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

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## **Simplify Your Strategy To Wellness !**

**By Kim Hemminger RN, BSN; Health Risk Manager, Wellness Works For You**

I never met a Human Resources Director I didn't like or at least admire ! *Hire the perfect employee. . . keep the workplace safe. . . write policies. . . manage workers compensation, terminate employees, drug test employees and now, in order to manage rising insurance costs. . . make sure all employees are healthy or at least on their way to becoming healthy !*

I am amazed and exhausted when I think of the daily challenges Human Resources Directors navigate. As a Health Risk Manager and Wellness Educator I am convinced that comprehensive wellness programs and policies in the workplace are essential tools when addressing these challenges.

Motivated by my belief in workplace wellness, and an admiration for those responsible for these programs, I am committed to implementing and maintaining Wellness programs in the workplace.

For over 18 years, I have provided health, safety and wellness programs and witnessed small and large businesses taking their first steps to a healthy workplace; steps as simple as serving fresh fruit instead of doughnuts at the morning meetings to offering onsite health screenings or exercise programs or health fairs.

Everywhere wellness is embraced the HR managers start to hear their employees talk about how their cholesterol is down; they no longer need their blood pressure medicine now that they are walking everyday; they feel much better now that they have quit smoking; they know the health fair saved their life because it identified their diabetes. Personal accounts from employees are the best evidence that wellness programs save and enhance lives.

And that is good news. Not just for the employees but for the company's bottom line. Healthier and happier employees mean reduction in sick leave and work injuries and fewer catastrophic illnesses and unnecessary or overuse of health benefits. There will be reduced absenteeism and improved productivity. In today's economy a company can't afford not to have a wellness program in place.

There are many wellness program offerings to choose from. Deciding which one best fits your company can be a daunting task. For the best success, look for one that addresses the top concerns of your senior management and fits the culture of your employees. A wellness program that doesn't deliver a savings for the company or one that employees don't buy into is a waste of time and resources.

For companies that are looking into a wellness program for the first time, it can be beneficial to engage the services of a wellness provider that will do a Workplace Assessment. This

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assessment is then used to develop a Wellness strategy that will bring the most benefit to the company. I would also recommend offering Health Risk Appraisals for all employees. HRA's identify each employees personal health risks and provide detailed plans for reducing those risks and improving an employees health. I have found HRA's to be a powerful personal motivator and the group summary report is an important tool to assist in the development of your companies Wellness Strategy.

*A company's approach to wellness does not have to be complicated but it should be comprehensive and embraced from the top management to the hourly employee.*

The true beauty of "Workplace Wellness" is that it is the ideal place to impact a population as a whole. Over 12 million people work in America. Workplaces are captive audiences, with people returning to the same environment day after day. Whatever is in the environment will have an influence on the long term behavior and therefore health of the employees working there.

When you change the behavior of an employee in the workplace it trickles down into their families, and thus our communities, contributing to a healthy American culture as a whole.

*Wellness Works For You provides wellness strategies and workplace assessments for companies of all sizes.*

*For more information contact:*

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