Evolution of Employer Wellness: The Research Perspective

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modifiable Risk Factors</th>
<th>Chronic Disease Prevalence (U.S. working population, 19-64)</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>Hypertension: 17.3%</td>
<td>Mortality &amp; Quality of Life</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Heart Disease: 2.5%</td>
<td>Medical Care Spending</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Physical Activity</td>
<td>Cancer: 4%</td>
<td>Productivity Losses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor Nutrition</td>
<td>Diabetes: 5.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excessive Alcohol</td>
<td>Anxiety or Depression: 13.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asthma or COPD: 9.0%</td>
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<td>Back/Disc: 9.7%</td>
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<td>Obesity: 29.5%</td>
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Prevalence estimates based on author's analysis of 2008-2010 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey for employed individuals 19-64 years of age.
Health and Productivity Management

- **Wellness programs introduced**
  - 1970s

- **Expansion of programming for cost control**
  - 1980s-1990s

- **ROI for productivity and medical care benefits**
  - 2000-2010

- **Broadening value proposition**
  - 2010-

Goetzel & Ozminkowski, 2000
Soler et al. 2010
http://www.sweatsedo.com/blog?blogstart=6
Program Design

Health Information
- Health risk assessments
- Biometric screenings
- Technology-enhanced monitoring

Education
- Coaching
- On-line education
- Nutrition courses

Activity-Based
- Fitness classes
- Walking competitions
- Biking to work
- Healthy cooking classes
What is the path?

- Organizational Assessment & Program Implementation
- Engage Employees
- Reduce Health Risks
- Generate Economic Benefits

Optimally, we’d like to test for causal pathways, but this can be challenging in the ‘real-world.’
# What Influences Employee Engagement?

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<tr>
<th>Organizational Culture</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Incentives</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| • Physical and psychosocial environment that encourages health-promoting decisions | • Provide rationale for program  
• Use broad and targeted marketing through traditional and electronic media | • Encourage participation through use of incentives  
• Vary by framing, structure, timing, and salience |
What is the path?

Organizational Assessment & Program Implementation

Engage Employees

Reduce Health Risks

Generate Economic Benefits
Medical Care Costs

Value on Investment (VOI)

Productivity

Organizational Performance

- Medical Care
  - Disability

- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism

- Turnover
- Retention
- Engagement
- Profits
- Reputation

- Profits

- Reputation
Methodology Matters

• Population on which “savings” results are based
  – Individual employer’s population or broader set of employer clients served by a vendor
  – “Calculator-based” (based on historical model) or customized to employer client
Methodology Matters

- Strongest methods for evaluation examine *changes* in participation and *changes* in outcomes over time
Methodology Matters

- Other challenges of “real-world” evaluation
  - Voluntary nature of programs and selection bias issues
  - Measurement
    - Gaps
    - Validity
  - Simultaneous changes in other benefit offerings
Three Important Questions

• What does my organization want to achieve from its wellness program?
• What is my organization willing to invest in time and resources to generate those changes?
• What is the value to my organization of knowing the health and economic benefits generated by our wellness program?