



# IMPLEMENTING WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMS WITH PURPOSE

A Step-by-Step Guide

**While providing a comprehensive health insurance and workplace benefits package is essential, it is also critical to offer assistance that supports people's whole health and well-being. This is even more critical today with many people working remotely, often managing greater home and family responsibilities, while also worrying about the uncertainty that the pandemic has caused.**

However, when it comes to offering this support, every organization is different and what works well for one business might not be as effective for another. So how do you know what will work for your employees and your organization? How can you get buy-in from your internal stakeholders for wellness programs when budgets are tight?

In 2020, Cigna commissioned the "Health and Wellness in Workplaces: What Works? - ROI Analysis of Health & Wellness Interventions" report, which involved the largest systematic review of the impact of workplace wellness interventions ever undertaken. Through detailed analysis of peer-reviewed academic articles and research studies, the report examined data from over 100 academic sources to extract key insights and showcase global best practices for implementing wellness programs at organizations of all sizes.

Drawing on the content of this report, we have created a simple set of guidelines on how to organize, develop and evaluate wellness programs. This includes everything from justifying why you need such a program, to how to measure and show the success of your program once it's up and running.

## The Evolution of Wellness



**1990s**

Rise in healthy eating habits and physical activities



**Recent years**

Personalized & holistic health - focus on emotional and mental well-being



**COVID-19 and beyond**

Increasing priority for organizations



## WHY IMPLEMENT WELLNESS PROGRAMS?

Wellness programs support the whole health and well-being of your employees, both as a group and as individuals.

Beyond the positive outcomes for your existing employees, implementing wellness programs also makes your company more attractive as an employer.

Providing programs and benefits around health and well-being is proven to give positive returns on investment (ROI) for your company.

According to our analysis, although the ROI varied depending on the structure and interventions offered by a program, the majority of programs yielded high returns by reducing healthcare costs, absenteeism, and delivering improved employee retention rates and productivity gains. These are some of the most common parameters that companies adopt to measure financial ROI on their wellness programs.

In one of the case studies reviewed by Cigna's report, the annual cost saving due to higher job retention in a depression outreach treatment program for a group of 304 participants was US\$1,800, which exceeded the annual program cost that ranged from US\$100 to US\$400.



## GETTING STARTED ON YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM JOURNEY

Before you start designing your whole health programs, or even decide to have one, understand your organizational objectives and needs, as well as the resources available to meet them by asking yourself these questions:

- What are the unmet needs of our employees? What are the health risks in the organization that affect employee well-being?
- Are employees back in the workplace or working from home? How best to deliver the program to as many employees as possible?
- What have we done in the past? What has worked?
- What is the utilization of existing programs? What drives utilization? What incentives work?
- What are our loss and cost drivers?
- What is our budget and timeline?



## WHAT ARE THE COMMON TYPES OF WELLNESS PROGRAM TO CHOOSE FROM?

Once you've understood your needs and identified your objectives, it's time to decide on what type of program best addresses these. There are programs that target individuals of a specific profile, and ones that are offered to the entire workforce.

Our research suggests that programs delivered at an individual level are most successful when they aim to reduce specific health risks, while programs delivered to the entire workforce are most successful when they promote healthy behaviors in general and develop a culture of wellness in the organization.

### PROGRAMS FOR THE ENTIRE WORKFORCE

- **Prevention programs** - programs that provide preemptive care and promote health awareness such as health screening, health risk assessments (HRA) and immunization initiatives.

#### GUIDE TO PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Drive reduction in absenteeism and healthcare claim costs

How they work: **Preemptive care** offered to majority of the workforce



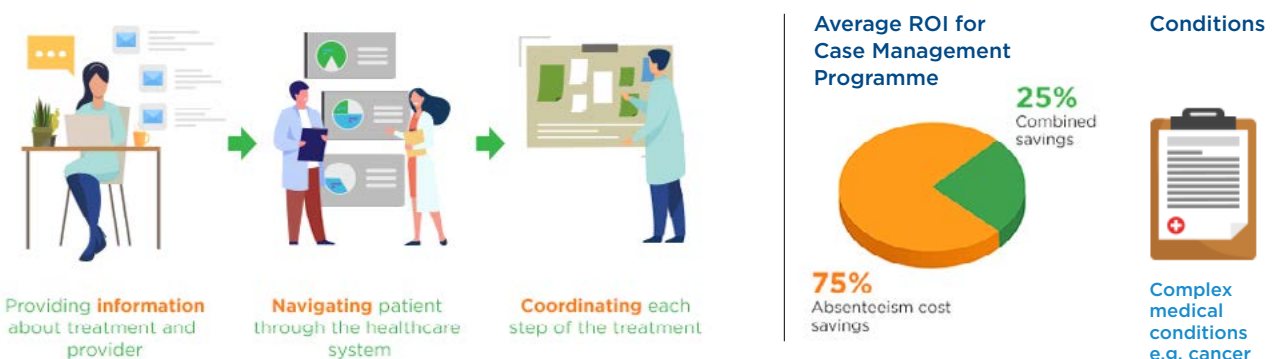
### PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- **Case management programs** - clinician-run programs that focus on managing an individual's journey of care. Generally used to support the management of complex medical conditions such as cancer, as well as chronic conditions.

#### GUIDE TO CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Drive reduction in absenteeism and increase productivity costs

How they work: **Case manager** coordinates **journey of care** to ensure best treatment for an individual

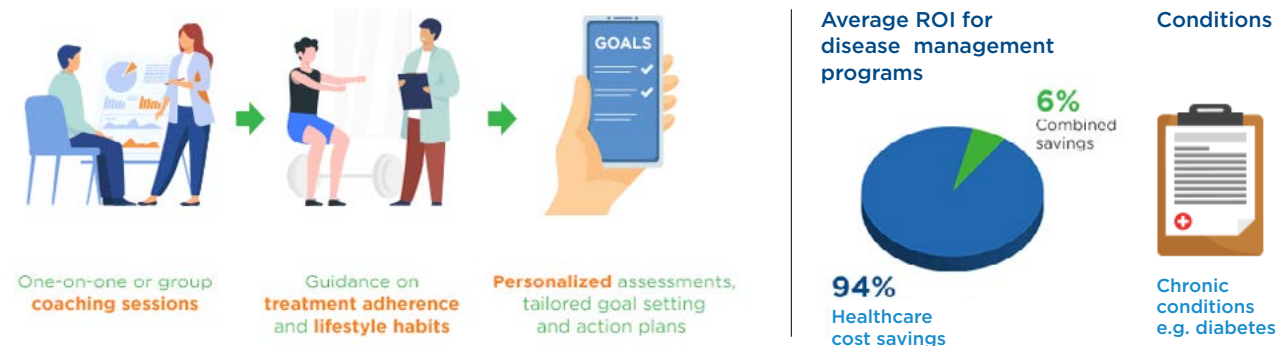


- **Disease management programs** – programs focused on supporting employees who are suffering from health conditions, usually involving one-on-one or group coaching sessions over a three to twelve-month period focusing on treatment adherence and healthy lifestyle habits to help improve the participants’ condition.

### GUIDE TO DISEASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Drive reduction in healthcare costs

**How they work:** Targeted support for employees suffering from a chronic condition



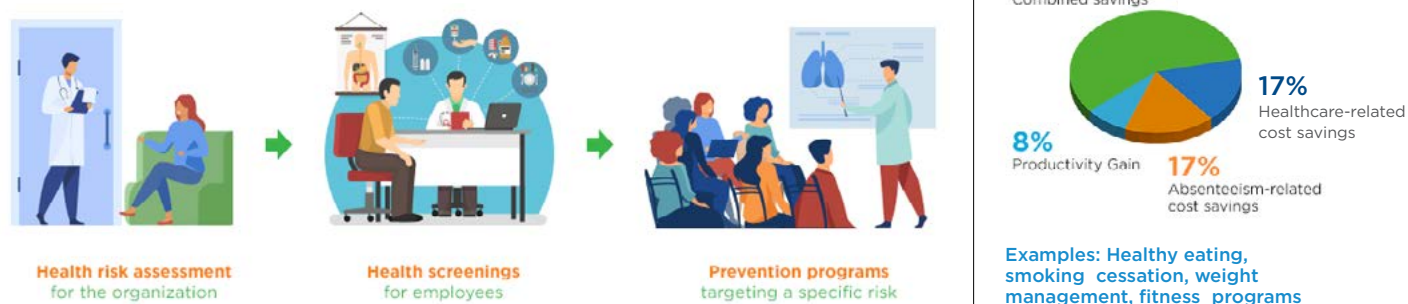
### PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS OR THE ENTIRE WORKFORCE

- **Lifestyle management programs** – programs that encourage positive health-related lifestyle and behavior change among employees, for example, healthy eating, smoking cessation, weight management and fitness programs, to reduce health risks over time. They can either be implemented for the whole workforce or target at-risk individuals with a predisposition for certain conditions, such as pre-diabetic individuals.

### GUIDE TO LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Drive healthcare-related cost savings, productivity gains and more

**How they work:** Encourage positive health-related lifestyle and behavior changes for the whole workforce or at-risk individuals



## HOW DO I IMPLEMENT AN EFFECTIVE WELLNESS PROGRAM?

In today's interconnected world, it's no longer enough to think about body versus mind, health versus sickness or work versus life. All areas of life, from work and home, physical and mental health, to finances and family life are deeply interlinked to one another. This means it's vital to implement an effective wellness program from the beginning.

It's a great idea to lay out a long-term corporate wellness program. For organizations who are just starting out, the most common approach is to build a solid foundation in the first one to two years by focusing on employee awareness and collecting data which inform future planning. Prevention programs like immunizations and health risk assessments are a good place to start. Lifestyle management programs that offer a basic introduction to nutrition and physical activity are also popular choices in the early stages.

As you move further down the road, consider taking a more targeted approach and focus on programs that address the key loss drivers such as absenteeism, work-related injuries or illnesses. These may include musculoskeletal or back injuries and chronic medical conditions like obesity, which increase the risk of developing diabetes and cardiac disease and drive medical plan costs.

### Example

Ongoing: Case management program for individuals with complex conditions



## HOW CAN I DRIVE SUCCESS AND ENGAGEMENT FOR MY WELLNESS PROGRAM?

To get the best results from your wellness program, you need to be able to motivate people to participate as well as stay on the program for a continuous period of time. Here are some key success factors that help drive participation and engagement:

- **Leadership support** – visible championing of programs by senior and middle management is very important when promoting employee participation. Programs with middle management support yield a very high return on investment, averaging ten times the initial investment.
- **Understanding organizational and personal health needs** – mapping the organizational factors that affect employees' health and getting a good picture of employees' health profiles is very important, particularly for programs targeting specific segments of the workforce. You can do this by carrying out health risk assessments and health screenings.
- **Creative and culture-appropriate rewards** – incentives come in many forms. They can be participation or results-based; monetary or non-monetary. It's always important to bear in mind that different incentives work in different cultural settings. Spotlighting, for example, is a great way to reward and encourage participation in some cultures, but not such a good idea in others so you must consider this in the context of your own workforce.

## HOW DO I MEASURE SUCCESS?

While many employers know they need to tailor their wellness programs to their objectives, you'll be surprised how often organizations overlook the monitoring and evaluation of the programs they implement.

It's also understandable that some organizations find this step daunting given that some results are hard to measure or might be attributed to multiple factors. However, this is a critical part of the work to improve program offerings and make sure that objectives are met.

To make things a bit simpler, we can narrow our measurement parameters down to three categories:

- **Activity** - measures the level of employee involvement in wellness programs through participation and engagement rates
- **Outcomes** - includes health outcomes of employees (through health screenings and self-reported surveys) and financial outcomes like cost savings and improvement in productivity (through insurance claims data, HR records on absentee hours and turnover rates etc.)
- **Quality** - assesses employee's satisfaction with the programs, usually based on employee feedback

## FINAL TIP: START SMALL, BUT AIM FOR THE LONG HAUL

Remember that ROI may take time to realize, especially for lifestyle management programs which aim to shape long-term behavior. So, it is important to maintain program engagement over time while continuing to measure for success in the long-term.

Health matters are interconnected. Those who take care of their holistic well-being lower the risks of stress, poor mental health and depression. Because your whole health is affected by a number of different moving parts, at Cigna, we believe it's time for health and well-being services to reflect that.

Find out more about what makes Cigna trusted experts in health insurance plans today.

## HOW CAN CIGNA HELP YOU BUILD YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM?

At Cigna, Wellness Consultants work with our clients to go through their needs and objectives and design a plan based on their risk factors and claims and health screening data. There will also be ongoing discussions on program implementation balancing resources and timeline.

For more information about enhancing well-being and stress care for your organization, click below.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)