

Case Study:

Best practice health & well-being programs move the needle on population health

Many companies invest in workplace health and well-being programs to reduce employees' health risks and rein in costs. Yet how do you know if your investment is worth it? Do these programs improve the health of your employee population?

To answer these questions, we looked at the effectiveness of 16 employers' health and well-being programs over four years using our summary measures of health framework and our nine best practices for worksite health and well-being programs. All 16 employers are insured by HealthPartners; 11 use our health and well-being services.

How do these approaches measure health and well-being program success?

Summary measures of health

It's impossible to create a single measure that analyzes health comprehensively. That's why HealthPartners developed a summary measures of health framework to identify and address conditions that have the greatest impact on the health and well-being of our members, patients and the community. The three summary measures are current health, future health and well-being. These measures look beyond the absence of physical disease to how healthy behaviors and life satisfaction enhance well-being. Life satisfaction is a particularly compelling measure, with HealthPartners health assessments correlating it to overall higher productivity, lower health care and pharmacy costs, and higher adherence to behaviors that promote health.¹

We use this framework to track each patient or member's health, experience and total cost of care, creating the foundation for evidence-based approaches and practices to improve population health.

- **Current health** – Analyzing health plan claims creates insights into the conditions that place the greatest burden for ill health on an insured employee population.

- **Future health** – Health plan members provide self-reported data on their adherence to six lifestyle behaviors: tobacco use, fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity, alcohol use, sleep adequacy and healthy thinking. Future health also includes a component related to being up-to-date on preventive services.
- **Well-being** – Health plan members provide self-reported data on well-being and life satisfaction as it relates to emotional, physical, social, financial, career and community factors.

Best practices for worksite health

Key to the development of the summary measures of health is ensuring they are actionable, relevant metrics. Specifically, can we use these **measures** to assess the effectiveness of health and well-being **programs**? And, will there be a correlation between health and well-being program design and employee populations with higher trending summary measures?

To answer these questions, we developed a method to assess the effectiveness of workplace health initiatives. Our experts reviewed scientific literature to identify nine evidence-based best practices for health and well-being programs to follow that achieve better total population health outcomes:²

- **Leadership** – strategic planning and leadership engagement
- **Relevance** – accessible, evidence-informed options
- **Partnership** – worker involvement and representation
- **Comprehensiveness** – multi-level, integrated programming and education
- **Implementation** – targeted outreach
- **Participation** – meaningful and relevant participation incentives
- **Communications** – year-around communications
- **Data-driven** – measurement and evaluation

¹ Kottke, T. E., Gallagher, J. M., Rauri, S., Tillema, J. O., Pronk, N. P., & Knudson, S. M. (2016). New Summary Measures of Population Health and Well-Being for Implementation by Health Plans and Accountable Care Organizations. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 13. doi:10.5888/pcd13.160224

² Pronk, N. (2014). Best Practice Design Principles of Worksite Health and Wellness Programs. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*, 18(1), 42–46. doi: 10.1249/fit.0000000000000012

Can employer health and well-being programs have a measurable impact on employee population health over time?

Yes, the results of our analysis reveal that the employers experiencing higher employee current health trend scores also have robust workplace health and well-being programs following many of the nine established best practices. The top three employer health and well-being programs analyzed reached a large proportion of their employee population, were implemented as intended, saw significant employee participation rates and improved current health trends over time that reflect a population less burdened with disease.

Overall, robust health and well-being programs based on our nine best practices do correlate with measurable improvements in employee health at the population level.

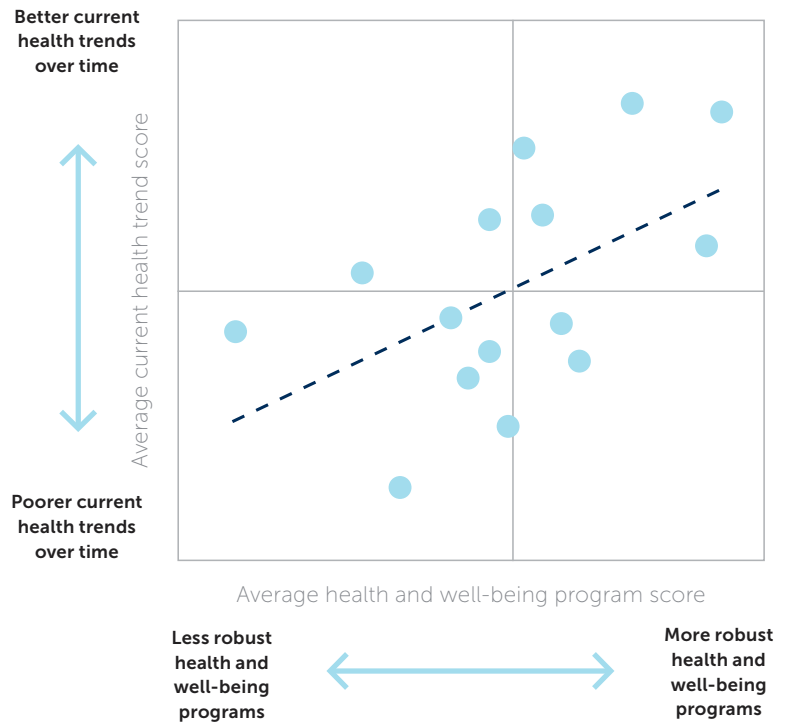
Top performing employer groups have these health and well-being program elements:

- Fully-executed communications plans coordinated with health plan communications as appropriate
- Visible leadership engagement
- Dedicated staff resources
- Work environment nutrition optimization
- Well-being coverage for employees and spouses that integrates health plan benefits
- Variety of on-site, telephonic, and digital wellness offerings, services and activities
- Program participation incentives and personalized resources

Want to learn more?

Nico Pronk, Chief Science Officer at HealthPartners, discusses how well-designed, evidence-informed health and well-being programs can improve health and well-being, save money, generate a positive culture at the workplace, and be an important asset to community health in [ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal's May/June 2020 issue](#).

Current health trends of 16 employers in relation to their health and well-being program best practice analysis



Build an effective health and well-being program for your organization

We can work with you to translate these summary measures and best practices into an effective health and well-being program that gives your c-suite confidence that you are improving the health of your employee population and your bottom line. Create stronger, innovative, actionable strategies to manage healthcare costs and develop more engaging workplace well-being initiatives.

Learn more

Call your broker, consultant or HealthPartners account manager at **952-883-5200** or **800-298-4235**.

