



Workplace Wellness: Selecting Effective Incentives for Your Wellness Program

Wellness issues important to you – brought to you by the insurance specialists at Denman Consulting Services, Inc..

When selecting incentives to promote involvement in your wellness initiatives, it is important to select carefully to yield the desired behavior from your employees. To determine which incentives to use, consider the behaviors that you want to encourage and the incentive values that have the greatest potential for driving those behaviors. By keeping this in mind, you will be well on your way to a successful wellness program at your facility. Here are some wellness program components and incentives that will drive employee involvement in those initiatives:

✓ **Stress Management**

- Incentives to increase the number of employees completing stress management training:
 - Hold training sessions on company time.
 - Offer a “door prize” for session attendees with a drawing held at the end of the session.
 - Provide an additional 20 minutes of lunchtime for attendees.

✓ **Tobacco Cessation**

- Incentives to encourage cessation of smoking in the short term and maintenance of non-smoking in the long term:
 - Restrict smoking and tobacco usage on your worksite.
 - Offer a “performance-based” bonus for quitting smoking.
 - Offer a seminar on the health effects of smoking and using tobacco products.
 - Provide a prize for employees who abstain from smoking for a year after joining the program (extra day of vacation, discount on health premium, etc.).

✓ **Healthy Weight Management**

- Incentives to encourage participation in weight management programs and to achieve and maintain a healthy weight:

- Provide a food diary for program attendees to identify cravings, triggers, thoughts about food and their daily caloric intake.
 - Give gift certificates to employees for maintaining personal weight goals after one year.
 - Give employees several hours time off for maintaining personal weight goals.
 - Keep track of small victories, such as exercising five days per week or eating five or more servings of produce daily. Provide small weekly rewards or accumulate “points” toward a larger reward.
 - Provide airline vouchers or other prizes for employees who meet weight loss goals within a specific amount of time in the program.
- ✓ **Hypertension Screening and Control**
- Incentives to motivate employees to participate in screenings and help them maintain healthy blood pressure levels:
 - Provide screenings on company time on-site.
 - Invite employees’ spouses to attend screenings at no cost.
 - Provide gift certificates for employees who successfully lower their blood pressure, and for those who maintain a healthy blood pressure level one year after their initial screening.
- ✓ **Physical Activity and Exercise Programs**
- Incentives to increase the number of employees involved in organized physical activities, and to maintain an exercise routine for the long term:
 - Offer early registration discounts for employees who sign on to the program within a specific amount of time.
 - Allow participating employees to flex their hours to accommodate an exercise routine.
 - Offer free items such as gym bags, water bottles, sweat towels and T-shirts for participating employees.
 - Provide a cash incentive for employees who maintain an exercise routine for at least six months following the beginning of the program.
- ✓ **Utilizing Self-Care Methods**
- Incentives to increase the use of self-care methods (managing minor medical conditions, using home treatment options and diagnostic tests, and managing chronic health issues) and improve participation in employee health education workshops on the topic:
 - Provide a health plan premium discount for those who attend health care workshops.
 - Permit employees to waive benefit surcharges if they attend wellness seminars on self-care techniques.
 - Offer rewards for employees who bring a friend or family member to a wellness seminar.
- ✓ **Employee Use of a Fitness Facility**
- Incentives to motivate employees to use a corporate or community fitness facility on a regular basis:
 - Provide flex hours for employees who use the fitness facility at least four days a week.
 - Obtain a corporate discounted membership rate for community fitness facilities.

- Provide a cash or other reward for employees who go to the facility 50, 100, 200, etc. times.
 - Provide a gym bag, water bottle, sweat towel or hat for those who sign up for a membership.
- ✓ **Cholesterol Testing**
- Incentives to increase participation in cholesterol testing and improve cholesterol test scores in the long term:
 - Provide cholesterol testing at no cost on-site.
 - Offer a cash reward for employees who reduce their total cholesterol levels by 10 percent or reduce their LDL (“bad” cholesterol) level.
 - Provide material rewards (T-shirts, hats, etc.) for those who lower their cholesterol within a year of joining the program.
- ✓ **Participation in Health Education Workshops and Contests**
- Incentives to increase participation in education workshops designed to increase employee wellness knowledge:
 - Offer a “door prize” for those who attend wellness workshops.
 - Provide extended lunch breaks or flex scheduling for participation in a wellness workshop.
 - Provide gift certificates for employees who complete a specific number of workshop sessions.
 - Provide attractive prizes for those who enter wellness contests such as travel vouchers, vacation days and cash rewards.
- ✓ **General Participation or Goal Achievements**
- The following are common incentives that could work for a variety of wellness programs or initiatives – just be sure to specify exactly what must be achieved in order to receive the award:
 - Employee recognition in a newsletter, on the company intranet or during company meetings
 - Health insurance premium discounts or extra employer contributions into health reimbursement accounts or health savings accounts
 - Company apparel
 - Discounts or coupons for company store/café
 - Using a points system to reward certain behaviors, and having a reward catalog based on points accumulated
 - Health-related gear, such as pedometers, gym bags, water bottles, stress-relief balls, etc.
 - Extra vacation time or paid time off
 - Flexible scheduling to accommodate wellness activities

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