

## **Seven Steps to Workplace Wellness**

WELCOA (see resources section), a company that offers comprehensive wellness programs, recommends Seven Steps to workplace wellness:

1. **Secure the support of top management.** If management fails to buy into the program, it will not succeed.
2. **Appoint a Wellness Committee.** The purpose of this committee is to plan, operate and promote the program. Appointees to the committee might include:
  - a. Top management
  - b. Union representatives
  - c. Human resources personnel
  - d. Health and safety officers
  - e. Employees interested in health and wellness
3. **Collect data on your employees,** including:
  - a. Reviewing medical records
  - b. Facility assessments: Poor facilities can contribute to employee health problems
  - c. Check absenteeism rates, it is a good indicator of health as well as the morale of employees
  - d. Health risk appraisals – these surveys ask employees about their health habits and family histories. Appraisals could include questions about physical activities, smoking, sleeping patterns, depression, stress, seat belt use and nutrition
  - e. Health screenings, including blood pressure, height-to-weight ratios, cholesterol levels, hearing and other factors, keeping in mind it is important to protect an employee's privacy
  - f. Employee surveys structured to collect health risk prevalence (smoking, exercise activity, weight, other characteristics)

- g. Focus groups among employees, individual interviews, meetings, and
  - h. Cultural audits, does management's expectations, feelings and concerns match those of employees at other levels throughout the company
4. **Create a simple plan and set simple goals.** If excess weight is identified as a primary concern, for example, set a goal of losing so many pounds as a company.
  5. **Choose the appropriate intervention,** ranging from providing informational materials to promoting exercise as part of an employee's daily schedule.
  6. **Create a supportive environment.** If you want your employees to exercise more, make it easier for them to do so during the workday (walking or bicycle trails around your facilities, for example).
  7. **Carefully evaluate outcomes.** Is your program meeting your expectations and goals? If not, how can it be changed? Evaluate feed-back in each of the following categories:
    - participant involvement,
    - participant feedback and satisfaction,
    - changes in information and attitudes,
    - changes in population behavior,
    - changes in health status measures,
    - specific organizational economic gains.

**Pilot Program:** If there is general resistance to an organization-wide program, then initiate a pilot program in an area where data on productivity and health costs is more easily measurable.