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Total Rewards and Employee Well-Being Practices

According to a new report by the HR organization, World at Work, employers continue to depend on health and wellness initiatives to curb healthcare costs and foster a successful and productive workforce. Organizations have many reasons for offering well-being programs/initiatives, and the top reasons include: improve employee health (82%), decrease medical premiums and claims costs (78%), and perceived value to employees (77%). Almost half (49%) of organizations stated that they have an employee well-being strategy in place, and 54% of those organizations have had their strategy in place for three or more years.

While many of the top well-being elements supported are health-related, these findings also indicate a shared distribution among health-related and work-life balance program rankings. Since 2011, more organizations are supporting well-being by offering physical health risk assessments (biometrics, physical fitness, etc.) as this has increased by 14 percentage points to 58%, which is a statistically significant result (Table 1).

Highlights of the recent report include:

- For the majority of well-being programs (90% of responding organizations), all active employees are typically eligible to participate in the majority of programs. This is slightly lower than the 94% of organizations that reported widespread eligibility in 2011, which is a statistically significant shift. Spouses or domestic partners is the next largest eligible group (30%). When asked if some programs are only available to select employees or groups, programs available to exempt/salaried employees have increased 4% and executive-only programs have risen 5% since 2011.
- The organizations with existing programs, 74% anticipate an increase or considerable increase to their well-being offerings, while 24% indicate no change. Only 2% expect a decrease in well-being program and activity offerings. The principal reason for those predicting an increase in offerings is the impact on healthcare costs, which is consistent with findings in 2011. Three-quarters of organizations find employee satisfaction as the most positive measured effect of well-being programs, followed by biometric screening, employee engagement, and productivity (Table 2).
- Organizations that offer employer-sponsored healthcare believe they would keep most of their well-being offerings if they discontinued employer-sponsored healthcare. The well-being programs that organizations are most likely to keep fall in the workplace environment and work-life balance categories. Ninety-five percent of organizations would keep workplace safety and 92% would continue to encourage time away from work (vacation, not plugged in) and flexible schedules. The programs with higher drop rates include: resiliency training

(29%), mental/behavioral health coverage (27%), and wellness coaching (26%).

- In 2014, the continuum revealed that 39% of organizations are operating with an integrated approach to well-being, as opposed to a more traditional and less integrated approach. This has shifted from 2011 when 45% of organizations landed on the integrated side of the scale. Integrated well-being organizations are more likely to rate the measured effect on healthcare costs extremely positive or positive (73%) compared to traditional wellness organizations (53%). Additionally, integrated well-being organizations are more likely to rate the measured effect on employee satisfaction extremely positive or positive (77%) compared to traditional wellness organizations (68%).

414 members were surveyed, representing all American employees.

Table 1. Health related elements of well-being supported by surveyed employers.	
EAP resource and referral	81%
Immunizations	72%
Mental/behavioral health coverage	70%
Physical fitness (exercising)	69%
Smoking cessation	66%
Diet and nutrition	61%
Physical health risk assessment (biometrics, physical fitness, etc.)	58%
Disease management	57%
Wellness coaching	38%
Stress management	36%
Time management	31%
Behavioral/mental health-risk assessment	30%
Yoga	28%
Healthy workplace relationships	19%
Behavioral modification	14%
Healthy personal relationships	11%
Meditation/mindfulness training	10%
Resiliency training	8%
None	4%
Source: WorldatWork, March 2015	

Table 2. Measured effects of well-being programs.

	Extremely negative/negative	No effect or neutral	Extremely positive/positive
Employee satisfaction	1%	25%	75%
Biometric screening	2%	25%	73%
Employee engagement	0%	28%	72%
Productivity	0%	29%	71%
Healthcare costs	2%	33%	66%
Absenteeism rates	0%	37%	63%
Employee stress	7%	36%	57%
Disability costs	2%	45%	53%
Turnover rates	4%	52%	44%

Source: WorldatWork, March 2015



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