



benefitNEWS

Wellness Plans continue to be Embraced

According to a new study by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research & Educational Trust, employers continue to embrace the use of wellness programs as a strategy to create a healthier workforce and lower their healthcare costs over time. In fact, the report suggests that an astonishing 98% of large firms (with 200 or more workers) and 73% of smaller firms (with less than 200 workers) are offering at least one wellness program this year.

Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, employers may increase an employee's premium contribution up to 30% of the cost of the health plan for not completing wellness programs, as long as the wellness program is reasonably designed and there are alternatives for workers who cannot meet the standard. Per the report, the most common wellness initiatives include:

- Flu shots (87% of large firms)
- Employee assistance programs (79%)
- Online resources for healthy living (77%)
- Smoking cessation programs (64%)
- Gym membership discounts or on-site exercise facilities (64%)

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