

An overview of health promotion programs



ASSIGNMENT: What are health prevention programs? What role do employers play with health prevention programs? Research health prevention programs and the various companies that offers them. Which company's program do you prefer? Why?

In November 2006, I began my journey to lose weight and become a healthy individual. When I was 203 pounds, I knew I needed to lose weight because I was currently vulnerable of succumbing to the many health issues like high blood pressure, heart disease, joint problems and even exercise induced asthma. During my quest to lose 63 pounds, I began a health prevention program that overtime would eliminate or greatly reduce my chances of ever contracting a lifestyle related illness. I didn't know it at the time, but many businesses today work to provide the same lifestyle I was seeking to achieve and still look to obtain today. If businesses look to provide health prevention programs, it would be a great idea to learn more about what health prevention programs entail.

Health prevention programs are programs that are created to help the public fight off illnesses and overcome diseases. Health prevention programs stave off chronic diseases such as heart disease, various cancers, and lower respiratory infections such as COPD and asthma. Most of these can be prevented by stopping high-risk behavior such as smoking and overeating. The reason why health prevention programs are so effective is because, like the name says, these are programs that prevent illnesses as mild as obesity (which is in no way mild) and as severe as heart attacks and strokes (Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2014).

Chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes are responsible for at least seven and as much as 10 deaths a year in the United States. Furthermore, treatment for the preventable yet chronic ailments costs over 75% of the over \$2.5 trillion that is spent annually on health care costs. Finally, yet not exhaustively, obesity is responsible for a great deal of health costs. Because disease risks often related to various social activities like tobacco use, physical inactivity, poor diet, and alcohol abuse, this often results in unnecessary reasons for poor health and even more unnecessary reasons for chronic disease (Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2014).

Businesses are interested in health prevention because of the indirect costs businesses incur for poor health in the work place such as absenteeism, physical disability, and reduced employee work output. These cause are further exacerbated by increased health insurance costs. These reductions in production due to preventable health issues have been known to cost employers in the United States as much as \$1,685 per individual employee per year. Another way to view it is that it costs employers \$225.8 billion a year (Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2014).

This means there is a necessity to implement and then expand an evidence-based health prevention that will provide the opportunity to improve the health but also control health care spending in the United States. Health prevention programs have proven effective. Workplace health programs have influenced social norms; establish new health policies, promote healthy lifestyles, and generate health screenings like immunizations, and reduce on-the-job exposure to hazards that can cause injury and diseases. When

evidence based health prevention programs are effectively executed, these programs can generate around a \$3 profit for every dollar spent (Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2014).

Health prevention programs have also benefited programs that focus on aging. Measures taking by the Administration on Aging is has implemented programs that benefit older adults manage and improve their health. Older Americans often suffer on a daily basis with chronic diseases, illnesses and injuries such as heart disease, arthritis, and diabetes. Health prevention programs are key in teaching older adults healthy behaviors and lifestyles. One of the best ways health prevention programs benefit older adults is through the use of community based wellness programs. These health prevention programs have been proven track record of increasing self-sufficiency and independence among older adults while decreasing trips to health care providers so that older adults are able to care and manage their health on their own for longer periods of time (HHS Administration on Aging, 2014).

As alluded to earlier, businesses have benefited and have a heightened role in generating health prevention programs. First of all, companies can create three to five health intervention programs that often involve a combination of new programs, policies, and even environmental programs that highlight and celebrate nutrition and physical activity, while discouraging alcohol abuse, drug use and tobacco use in the workplace. One example of these programs include creating an inner and outer workplace environment that is completely tobacco-free while also subsidizing counseling to quit smoking and excess drug and alcohol issues. Another programs brings a local

farmer's market into the workplace. The farmer's market not only provides the produce but also offers nutritional education and counseling, menu creations based on healthy, whole foods, non-junk foods in the workplace cafeteria and vending machines, counseling for weight loss and weight maintenance; and physical activity /lifestyle counseling, such as walking and running clubs. A successful workplace health prevention program will result in the full support and commitment of health prevention leadership and employees that are fully entrenched in all core health prevention programs that are created in a healthy lifestyle culture within the worksite (Health Promotion Programs, 2014).

There are quite a few businesses that have excellent health prevention programs. First of all, SAS an international software company located in North Carolina, provides for its employees a wellness program that is built around its recreation and fitness center. This recreation and fitness center is open not only to SAS employees but also the employee family members and those who retire from SAS. Furthermore, SAS provides health checks, smoking cessation programs and incentives for accomplishing fitness goals. Finally though not exhaustively, the recreations and fitness center also provides preventative services as well as primary health care services to the SAS employees and their dependents (EHS Today, 2014).

Another company that excels in generating health prevention programs is actually a university. The University of Alaska provides their employees an opportunity to complete a wellness profile so that they can uncover any hidden health concerns and then direct the employee to the right department in the university's on-site health and wellness services. The

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university's employees can then take part in applicable health screenings, health and fitness events, health and wellness coaching, and online health tracking. Employees who take part in the university's health prevention programs are often reward for participating in the program (EHS Today, 2014).

A third company that excels in providing a health prevention program is the Hamilton Utilities Corporation. This company health prevention program has the goal of providing a healthy workplace for all of their employees. The health prevention program encourages their employees to go beyond popping pills and submitting to surgeries for health maintenance but to look to maintain health from a holistic point of view. This involves measures such as a supportive work environment, workers safety, and employee empowerment programs. The company's wellness team then evaluates and implements their wellness programs. Then the company's management team provides support for the company's wellness efforts through employee training, employee participation incentives, and implementing vending machines that provide healthy food choices in the workplace (EHS Today, 2014).

Of all the programs, I am most impressed with the health prevention program that is found at SAS. Frist of all, I like how they provide a smoke free environment outside as well as inside. I remember one company I worked at where I needed to drop off an overnight package in a FedEx drop box that was right next to a prime smokers spot. I always had to hold my breath at that spot because that second-hand cigarette smoke was indeed quite intense. Furthermore, I really appreciate the thoughtfulness of SAS to <https://assignbuster.com/an-overview-of-health-promotion-programs/>

provide a fitness center that is accessible not only to the employees but also to the employees family and it's available to the employees long after they retire. Finally, though certainly not exhaustively, I appreciate how SAS rewards employees for accomplishing fitness goals really touches my heart. I would love to work at a company that rewards a person for reaching his or her goal weight, completing a 10K and even anniversaries for each year an employee's goal weight is maintained. I would be honored to work at such a company.

Conclusion

After completing this assignment, I'm even more encouraged to lose the thirty pounds I've regained. I want to live a long and healthy life and I can't do that with a thirty pound excess weighing down my heart and challenging my breathing and joints. Furthermore, even with health insurance, managing the hazards of excess weight is expensive. I would rather spend money on tap dance classes and running 10Ks than on prescriptions for managing high blood pressure. Finally, though certainly not exhaustively, I have a six-year-old nephew that I want to watch grow up, graduate from college and get married. I've always said I want to dance at his wedding; and I can't do that as well if dancing will cause breathing problems due to excess weight. I'm so thankful for companies that provide health prevention programs because they encourage me to maintain my own healthy lifestyle.

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