



Wellness programs measure success in different ways. It's important to remember that behavior change precedes improved health status. Key metrics that gauge the effectiveness of a wellness program include:

- Reduced absenteeism and performance
- Greater employee retention
- Measurable weight loss
- Fewer smokers
- Increased productivity
- Lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- You can measure these metrics by administering a companywide survey before and after launching the program. Another idea is to hold wellness screenings once a year. If you use a vendor to administer your wellness activities, make sure that they track the metrics that are the most important to you.

## Take the 5M Approach

A successful wellness program does not happen overnight. It takes time, dedication, and commitment. If your organization is ready to give it a try, just remember the 5Ms to better health:

1. Maximize results by choosing the right approach. Decide what you're trying to accomplish and set realistic goals.
2. Make your organizational culture wellness-focused. Help eliminate social pressures by offering employees healthy alternatives.
3. Market the program. Communicate your program regularly.
4. Motivate people to action through incentives. Encourage people to succeed by offering incentives.
5. Measure your progress. Reviewing your program will help you determine if you've set realistic goals.

Whatever the size of your company or depth of your wellness plan, there is no doubt that the health of your employees has a direct impact on your company's bottom line.

### About Healthyroads, Inc.

Healthyroads, Inc. (Healthyroads) provides health education programs that help members take better care of themselves and achieve healthier lifestyles. Program components include:

- Telephone-based education and coaching
- Customized meal and exercise planning

- Diet and restaurant menu analyses
- Award-winning educational materials
- Online health trackers
- Discounts of up to 40 percent on health products, plus free shipping
- Discounts on services from a national network of chiropractors, acupuncturists, massage therapists, and dietitians
- Best pricing on fitness club

- memberships
- An incentive system where members earn program participation points that can be redeemed for health products
- A member outreach program that includes a quarterly newsletter and outbound welcome calls
- Bi-annual utilization reporting



## How to Start a Wellness Program

Corporate wellness programs are a hot topic these days. With nearly two-thirds of all adults now considered overweight or obese, the ramifications for U.S. companies are a staggering \$12.7 billion annually, according to the National Business Group on Health.

Smart employers are tackling the issue head-on with multifaceted health and wellness programs. The good news is that even a simple plan can help a company reduce absenteeism, increase productivity, and boost morale.

But how do you get started? What are the steps involved? Simply follow the 5M approach and get your company on the road to better health today.



The first step is to maximize results by choosing the right approach. For example, what are you trying to accomplish? What do you wish to see happen as a result of your efforts? This could be anything from losing 1,000 pounds as a company to reducing people's cholesterol, high blood pressure, and stress.

One way to do this is by implementing a companywide health education program. Not all programs, however, are built the same. Key features of a well-designed wellness program include:

### Convenient access

Driving to an appointment is often inconvenient and time-consuming. For maximum flexibility, consider providing your employees with options such as telephone- and Internet-based education programs—which are accessible at home, in the office, or on the road.

### An evidence-based approach

Clinical research supports the effectiveness of telephone-based counseling. Whether members are quitting smoking, improving their diet, or increasing their physical activity, telephone-based counseling—in combination with

printed materials—has consistently proven to be a low-cost, effective way to disseminate health information needed to promote behavior change.

### Qualified educators

High-quality programs employ qualified health professionals who undergo ongoing clinical training to ensure that they have access to valid, up-to-date information. The types of credentialed professionals retained by top programs include registered dietitians, certified personal trainers, registered nurses, and certified health educators.

In many companies, there are strong social pressures to participate in pizza parties and birthday celebrations. You can help make your organizational culture wellness-focused by:

**Forming a wellness committee**

Remember that people are more apt to change if they are involved in the process. Also, it is important to have support from the top down and the bottom up.

**Encouraging exercise**

If you do not have an onsite gym, consider offering corporate discounts at local fitness centers. Other ideas include providing bike racks, forming walk/run clubs, and offering flex time for exercise.

**Offering a brown bag luncheon series**

Employees bring their lunches to company-sponsored seminars that address topics such as lowering cholesterol, losing weight, and managing stress.

**Stocking your vending machines with healthy food and beverages**

No more soda or candy bars? This takes commitment, but you can do it! Consider inviting your employees to a taste

testing to determine their likes and dislikes. You can also subsidize healthy snacks so your employees pay discounted prices.

**Hiring caterers who offer healthy options**

If you're really committed to healthy living, you might reconsider the food you serve at corporate events—such as wheat bread instead of white, chicken instead of pizza, and frozen yogurt instead of ice cream. You'll be surprised how

many people will appreciate this effort.

**Taking advantage of your intranet**

This resource provides an effective and inexpensive medium of health promotion. For example, you can post nutritious recipes and a list of local restaurants featuring healthy entrées.

2.

**Make**  
your organizational culture wellness-focused.

A well-designed, comprehensive program will not achieve desired results if no one participates due to lack of awareness. So, some effort must be spent promoting the program to your employees. This can be done by:

- Holding a staff meeting to kick off the program.
- Reminding employees about the program through break room posters and payroll stuffers.
- Distributing newsletters, flyers, and brochures on healthy living.
- Hosting a wellness fair offering employees a chance to check their cholesterol, monitor their blood pressure, experience chair massages, and more.
- Posting healthy tips and tricks on the Intranet or via email.
- Choosing a wellness program that includes an outreach component (preferably a telephone-based one).

**Market**  
the program.

3.

Healthy habits are not formed over night. And despite the best intentions, most people making healthy changes find that their motivation to maintain new habits wanes over time. An incentive program not only encourages people to make positive changes, but helps employees stay on the road to better health. Here are some tips to help keep your staff excited:

**Recognition**

Celebrate outstanding achievements through an annual lifestyle award. Or, hand out smaller awards when you catch employees making healthy choices.

**Giveaway items**

Swap out your inventory of company pens and key chains with sports bottles, stress balls, and pedometers.

**Cash back**

Some companies have buffered the rise in medical premiums by offering employees cash bonuses by participating in wellness programs aimed at lowering long-term medical costs.

4.

**Motivate**  
people to action through incentives.