

At a time when the bottom line is bolder than ever, employers can find extra savings in employee wellness programs. Nearly 60% of employers' after-tax profits are spent on corporate health benefits, but there are many other reasons businesses choose to focus on wellness, including concern for employee health and well-being, rising health care costs, high absenteeism, high injury rates and productivity concerns. Fortunately, simple changes in your daily agenda can help facilitate a happier, healthier workplace and significantly lower healthcare costs.

When it comes to employee health, prevention is key and wellness programs should be designed to suit your needs. Start with baby steps. For example, take fitness breaks during long meetings, switch from morning donuts to morning fruit, and urge interested tobacco users to call the state's Free Quitline (1-877-U-CAN-NOW). Then, when you're ready for a more comprehensive program, incorporate wellness policies and provide preventative screening for blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, cancer, etc.

These programs work. Studies show that an estimated 25-30% of companies' medical costs per year are spent on employees with excess health risk, but addressing risk factors early can make a difference. By implementing a strong wellness program, employers can improve employee health, boost morale and productivity, and save up to \$15 for every \$3 spent. Now that's a good Return on Investment!

The Manatee County Health Department (MCHD) has received the ACHIEVE (Action Communities for Health, Innovation, & EnVironmental changeE) grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Through ACHIEVE, the MCHD is partnering with businesses and community members to promote wellness initiatives. For a free employee wellness program consultation, contact Megan Jourdan at the Manatee County Health Department. (941) 748-0747 x 1212 or megan_jourdan@doh.state.fl.us

Sources:

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