

Wellness Committee Guide

WELLNESS
CENTER

A wellness committee is a team of employees that meets and plans activities to pursue and promote good health for themselves and their co-workers.

A wellness committee provides guidance and support on all phases of a wellness program, including visibility and promotion, peer encouragement and advocacy, and evaluating and reporting results.

A wellness committee is responsible for:

- Developing, operating and evaluating a wellness plan, including a mission statement, goals and objectives
- Assisting in implementing, monitoring and evaluating wellness activities
- Communicating with employees to encourage participation in the program and highlight the importance of a healthy lifestyle
- Tracking and reporting results and accomplishments
- Acknowledging or rewarding positive results and accomplishments

Developing a Wellness Committee

Wellness committees should include volunteer representatives from all organizational levels, and represent all employees, including those with disabilities, so that diverse viewpoints can be included in program planning. Consider recruiting people in your organization who have responsibility for some aspect of employee health or well-being (e.g., human resources, employee benefits, occupational health and safety, the employee cafeteria, employee unions), as well as people responsible for environmental and policy changes (e.g., facilities and



operations, legal department). Additional considerations regarding committee membership should include:

- **Number** – Depending on the size of your organization, it is best to have between four and 12 committee members. Make sure the size of the committee is manageable.
- **Approval** – All committee members should have their immediate supervisor's support for the time and work they dedicate to the wellness committee.
- **Management** – Include senior and midlevel managers. Management should visibly support the program.

Operating a Wellness Committee

The first meeting is critical. At this meeting, the wellness committee will identify committee member roles and expectations, define its mission statement and goals, and determine how it will operate. The following is a sample agenda for the initial meeting:

- Find a volunteer to take minutes.
 - Establish the deadline to distribute minutes.
- Create a mission statement.
- Define member roles and expectations.
 - Identify chairperson, committee captain and co-captain.
- Decide the frequency and logistics of meetings.
- Determine the goals and objectives.
- Develop a strategy.
- Implement and communicate the wellness plan.
- Supply metrics for employees and management.

Be sure to select a time, date and place that is convenient for all committee members to attend the first meeting.

Mission Statement

A mission statement should be clearly written and is essential to ensure that everyone is on the same page regarding what the wellness committee wants to accomplish. The mission statement may include a description of the value of the program to the workplace and employees.

Here are some sample mission statements:

- To encourage employees' personal and professional productivity, and physical and mental well-being, the mission of the wellness committee is to foster a worksite culture that supports employees' desire to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- The mission of our wellness committee is to establish and maintain a workplace that encourages environmental and social support for a healthy lifestyle.
- Recognizing that employees perform their best when they are healthy, and that optimal employee performance is necessary for the company to be a leader in its field, the health promotion program aims to improve employee health and well-being.
- Because employees spend 40 hours a week at work, it is important that the worksite support healthy choices for employees. It is the mission of the wellness committee to work toward implementing policies that support a healthy workplace and healthy employees.
- The wellness committee will work to provide opportunities for employees to develop healthier lifestyles by supporting the adoption of habits and attitudes that contribute to their positive well-being.

Committee Member Roles and Expectations

- **Chairperson** – A member of senior management or HR who can provide financial and/or leadership support for the wellness program.
- **Committee captain** – Leads meetings, coordinates programs, assigns roles and responsibilities, and guides development of the committee's operating plan.

- **Co-captain** – Assists the captain and steps in when the leader is unavailable. This creates a sense of continuity if the captain leaves, and promotes team ownership and divides responsibility.
- **Committee team members** – Attend and actively participate in all committee meetings and volunteer for wellness program activities.

Your committee may have members who are particularly good at marketing or soliciting information from resources. Tap into the committee's internal strengths whenever possible. Also, members should serve on the committee for defined, overlapping periods to ensure fresh perspectives from new participants as well as continuous activity and carryover from previous volunteers.

Frequency and Logistics of Meetings

Determine the logistics of meetings. Create a meeting schedule or timeline for the committee that best suits the organization. The team may need to meet more frequently when first getting started or at certain times of the year (e.g., special events such as walks and health fairs, or when developing an annual operating plan).

Goals and Objectives

Before determining the committee's goals and objectives, it is important to assess the workplace. One method is to conduct an environmental evaluation, during which the physical attributes of the workplace are assessed (e.g., distance from parks, location of stairs, what kinds of foods are offered in the vending machines).

Another important part of data collection is assessing the needs, interests and preferences of employees. An employee interest survey should be created and distributed to all employees. The survey is key for engaging employees in the wellness activities selected. Learning their interests and needs will contribute to the overall success of the committee's work and of the wellness program. The results of the survey will guide the committee's goals for the action plan and the selection of the activities that will be introduced at the workplace.

Here are some considerations when designing the survey:

- Decide how to distribute the survey (email, Web, paper).
- Determine the deadline to return it.
- Determine the deadline to score it.
- Use the results to create goals/strategy.

Other potential sources of data that could be useful in constructing goals and plans include:

- Demographics
- Health risk appraisals
- Health screenings
- Data from claims
- Absenteeism reports
- Disability reports
- Safety reports
- Suggestion box

Strategy

With your mission statement in mind, use the information the committee collects to set goals and create a plan for developing wellness strategies. Goals can be broad (e.g., increase knowledge, move more, eat healthier or change behavior) and the activities selected (e.g., presentations, fitness challenges, health fairs) should help accomplish these goals. The plan should include activities and information that raise awareness, improve skills and create a supportive environment.

Implement and Communicate the Wellness Plan

Communication regarding the plan will have a tremendous impact on its success. Keep the communication clear and concise. Use the forms of communication that work best in your organization (e.g., email, website, social media, printed materials). Make sure employees know about the results of their efforts. The communication plan should:

- Announce the formation (or continuation) of the wellness committee
- Provide information to employees about upcoming programs and events
- Provide employees with periodic updates about the program's participation rates and overall results
- Highlight wellness champions within your organization

Measure Success

Committees should meet at the conclusion of each program to review the results and plan future programs. Evaluation could include:

- Participation
- Employee satisfaction
- Costs associated with the program
- Measurable results (e.g., blood pressure metrics improvements, number of miles/hours walked)

It is best if the committee catalogs and maintains minutes, surveys, survey reports, completed action plans and any other pertinent documents.

A successful wellness committee provides opportunities to establish a healthy working environment and foster health-oriented partnerships among all employees.

For more information on organizing a wellness committee, please contact your benefits advisor.

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