Healthy Outcomes

wellness  case management  condition care

Your guide to better employee health

Visit us at bcbsnc.com

BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina
The numbers don’t lie. Preventable illness makes up approximately 90% of all health care costs. And sadly, preventable illness also accounts for eight of the nine leading categories of death. By offering your employees Healthy Outcomes Wellness from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC), you’re talking a big step toward making a huge difference – not only for your organization, but for individual lives.

Wellness starts with we

BCBSNC is committed to being your partner in wellness. We can show you how to get more of your employees to participate and how to keep them engaged and motivated on the journey to better health. With the tips, tools and resources you’ll find in this guide, rolling out and maintaining an effective employee health and wellness program can be simple.
We have the resources
We’re excited to offer you the tools you need to help employees improve, manage or maintain their level of health – no matter where they are on the wellness continuum. In addition to the components of your wellness package, which are outlined on the following pages, here are some of the resources available to support your employees:

- Case Management – Personal outreach for high-risk individuals
- Condition Care – Our disease management program
- Health Line Blue℠ – Our 24/7 nurse line
- Blue365® – Discounts for gyms, vision, wellness and more

You have the influence
It’s true that the decision to make healthy lifestyle changes rests with the individual, but as an employer, you are in a unique position to influence and support your employees. Make sure they understand the benefits you provide, communicate the importance your organization places on wellness and work to create a culture within the workplace that supports healthy behaviors.

Rest assured, this guide pulls together a wealth of tips, tools and resources to help you do just that. And we’ll guide you, step-by-step, through planning, executing and measuring the success of your wellness program.

Together, we can make a difference
Getting started

Get ready
Doing a little footwork before you roll out your wellness program can really pay off. Taking a look at claims data, absenteeism/presenteeism rates, employee demographics and most common medical conditions and risk factors can help you:

+ Understand your employee population
+ Evaluate your organization’s environment and culture
+ Identify what you are trying to accomplish

Get set
Next, think about which behaviors you would like to influence and set some overall goals for your program. A solid, easy-to-execute plan is the key to success, and your BCBSNC representative can help you develop a personalized Success Plan (on pages 8–9). It provides the strategy and structure necessary to keep your wellness program on track.

Go
Now that you’re set up for success, it’s go time. When you kick off your wellness program during open enrollment, be sure to explain why your organization is offering Healthy Outcomes Wellness and how it benefits employees. BCBSNC makes it easy by providing you with a prepared kick-off presentation and an email template for senior leadership to use to announce the program to employees. See more resources available to you on page 11.
Key success factors

Senior leadership support
Having senior management’s support and commitment is critical to the success of your wellness program. Their involvement helps motivate your employees, build excitement and drive participation. And when they are on board, it’s easier for you to get any resources you may need to support your goals.

TIPS:
+ Include top brass: Invite them to kick off your wellness program.
+ Encourage them to model healthy behavior: Quit smoking, lose weight, etc.
+ Keep management involved: Keep motivation high with consistent visibility and communication throughout the year.

Communication and transparency
Capitalize on every possible opportunity to communicate about your wellness program. It can help build employee participation and motivation and boost the overall effectiveness of your wellness efforts.

TIPS:
+ Utilize company meetings to provide updates on wellness activities.
+ Keep the goals and progress front and center with employees.
+ Use BCBSNC flyers, email templates and posters to make communication easier.

Create a culture of wellness
For your wellness program to be most effective, make sure you develop a work environment that supports employees in their efforts to change.

TIPS:
+ Stock vending machines with healthy snacks.
+ Encourage “walking” meetings.
+ Promote discounted health and wellness products and services such as gym memberships through the Blue365® program.
+ Consider purchasing fitness equipment. Even simple exercise bands and fitness videos help.
+ Bring in a yoga instructor or provide chair massages periodically.
+ Consider spot “token” rewards: Supervisors can reward employees they spot making healthy choices – such as eating salad or taking the stairs – with a token that can be used for extended lunch time, prizes, etc.
+ Establish wellness warriors: This core team of wellness advocates from across the organization lead by example. They are individuals who are committed to change – for themselves and others. Highlight and use their successes to motivate other employees to make healthy changes, too.
Using incentives to drive behavior and get results

The success of your wellness program hinges on motivating employees to participate and retaining them once they do. Incentives can be very effective in driving participation and sustaining interest. In fact, studies using focus groups and surveys indicate that incentives are a deciding factor leading to participation in health and wellness programs. And research measuring program participation with and without incentives consistently finds that participation improves when incentives are offered.

The carrot vs. the stick

The truth is that both the carrot (incentives/rewards) and the stick (disincentives/penalties) can be very effective tools in changing behavior. But be aware that penalizing employees for not participating or meeting goals may have a negative impact on morale, job satisfaction and employee retention.

Types and amounts of incentives

It’s your choice as to which type of incentive you’d like to offer employees. Just make sure that the reward aligns with the perceived difficulty of the action. In other words, incentives should be valuable enough to motivate the individual to take the desired action. You want to create a tipping point and make the idea of participating in the wellness program worth the employee’s effort. Take a look at your employee population to help you gauge what type of incentive might resonate well. Here are some common incentives:

+ Contributions to health insurance premiums
+ Contributions to health accounts – Health Savings Accounts (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRA)
+ Cash
+ Paid Time Off (PTO)
+ Gift cards

Legal considerations

In order to protect individuals from discrimination, legal guidelines have been established for wellness programs through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). To make sure you are complying with regulations or for more information, visit dol.gov/ebsa/faqs/faq_hipaa_ND.html.
Your Healthy Outcomes wellness package

Healthy Outcomes Wellness offers a range of wellness activities, programs and online challenges designed to drive employee participation and help build a company culture of health and wellness. Here are the components of your organization’s wellness package. Each is designed to engage and motivate employees as they progress down the path toward better health.

Your wellness package begins on the effective date of your group’s plan and continues for a duration of 12 months.

Healthy Living Programs
These online programs last six weeks and cover a variety of topics, including smoking cessation, stress relief, nutrition, fitness and conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Throughout the program, employees receive weekly “to-do” lists, email reminders, tips and other resources to help them make healthy changes.

Employer Health Screening
A health screening event can be extremely beneficial in uncovering health issues in your employee population. Early detection and awareness help to prevent these costly health issues, and BCBSNC can help you hold a health screening event for your employees.

Screenings available:
+ Cholesterol
+ Glucose (blood sugar)
+ Body Mass Index (BMI)
+ Tobacco
+ And much more

Healthy Living Conversations
These concise, interactive video conversations offer an engaging and informative way to educate employees on a range of topics. To make the experience personal, content automatically adjusts depending upon the participant’s responses to the questions posed.

Online Monthly Seminars
Fun and engaging online seminars help members learn more about important health topics and take steps to live healthier. New seminars are available the first of each month and are often tied to National Health Awareness events.
Your Success Plan

Whether your Healthy Outcomes Wellness package spans 6, 9 or 12 months, planning for the entire year helps keep your workforce focused on health and wellness.

### Overall program goals:

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Measuring the success of your wellness program

Your Healthy Outcomes Wellness package provides you with detailed reporting, so you can easily track participation and progress on an individual and group basis. Use the data gathered through Healthy Outcomes’ state-of-the-art data engine to refine your strategy, respond to trends and maximize the effectiveness of your program.

By comparing your current results to the baseline levels you started with prior to the program, you’ll get a clearer picture of your organization’s progress. You can also try the following tactics to gauge success:

- Check absenteeism/presenteeism rates
- Survey employees

Overcoming challenges and resistance

To improve Health Assessment participation:

- Offer an incentive.
- Inform employees of the benefits:
  - It helps identify health risks individuals might not be aware of.
- Communicate directly about privacy:
  - Reassure your employees that you will follow HIPAA regulations relating to the use of their information.
  - Ensure that you have clear policies to support your processes around protecting employee information and confidentiality.
  - Clarify that the results of their Health Assessment (or other Healthy Outcomes data or components) will not be used to determine individual health plan premiums.
  - Direct employees to resources around privacy requirements so they can get more information on their rights regarding their protected health information, such as HIPAA at: dol.gov/ebsa/faqs/faq_hipaa_ND.html

Resistance to the Health Assessment

Some employees may be hesitant to take the Health Assessment. They may have privacy concerns and worry that the information they provide may be used against them. Or they may simply not perceive any personal value in completing the assessment.

Employees who think “My health is my business, not yours”

- Point out that preventable illness makes up approximately 90% of all health care costs. That makes wellness everyone’s concern. Helping your employee base become healthier helps everyone – including them – save on health care expenses.

Employees in dispersed locations

- We have a wealth of communication materials, which makes it easier for you to reach employees in multiple locations.
- Designate a wellness advocate at each location who can help keep employees in the loop and part of the program.

Spanish-speaking employees

- Spanish versions of certain BCBSNC communication materials are available to reach these employees.

Employees with limited computer access

- For online activities, consider setting up a computer station/kiosk in the office.
We can help

BCBSNC is committed to your success. We have a host of resources available to help you deliver an outstanding and effective wellness program to your employees:

**+ Employer Services:**
This online repository is where you can retrieve communications materials to help you effectively get the word out about Healthy Outcomes Wellness. You’ll find email templates, flyers, brochures, posters and more – covering every aspect of Healthy Outcomes Wellness – all available for the downloading. To access these resources, log in or register at bcbsnc.com/employers and click on your specific wellness package (for example: Core B).

**+ Flu shot clinics:** An onsite flu shot clinic hosted by BCBSNC makes getting flu shots more convenient for employees, which can increase participation and keep your workforce healthy and productive. To schedule a flu clinic for your organization, visit bcbsnc.com/fluclinic today.

**+ Health Line Blue™:** This is BCBSNC’s 24/7 nurse line, which is available to all members. When you promote the use of Health Line Blue, you could help employees save significant time and money. The registered nurses at Health Line Blue can help answer health-related questions quickly.

**+ Blue365®:** This discount program, exclusive to members, delivers deals on gym memberships, vision care, fitness equipment and more. Visit bcbsnc.com/blue365 for more information.

**+ Health Screening events:**
BCBSNC can help you hold a Health Screening event for your employees. These events enable you to reach every employee. Talk to your BCBSNC Representative for more information.

**+ Your BCBSNC team:** Your dedicated team is always here to help. A Client Engagement Representative can help you create a strategy to realize your organization’s wellness goals and tap into all of the resources that we have to offer.
An effective wellness program starts here

Get all the information you need to plan, kick off and maintain your Healthy Outcomes Wellness package from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC). This guide walks you through the process and offers valuable insights on how to maximize the effectiveness of your employee wellness program.

WHAT YOU GET

- Ongoing support from your BCBSNC representative
- An overview of your organization’s wellness package
- A Success Plan for the year
- Helpful tips, tools and resources
- And more

Visit us at bcbshnc.com