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**Worksite
WELLNESS**
Strategy FOR YOUR
COMPANY

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doing so for their employees*

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Designing a Successful Worksite Wellness Strategy for Your Company

How the Commonwealth of KY is doing so for their employees

By Stephanie Marshall, State Wellness Director,
Department of Employee Insurance, Personnel Cabinet

■ The Commonwealth's Journey to Wellness

The Commonwealth of Kentucky's Personnel Cabinet is striving to make the Commonwealth an Employer of Choice, and the newly launched Journey to Wellness program is one initiative assisting in these efforts. The Journey to Wellness program is designed to promote and improve the health of Commonwealth of KY employees. The program is encouraging employees to gain a greater awareness and a sense of empowerment to choose to lead a healthy lifestyle through a variety of inviting wellness activities, which are helping to build a culture supportive of wellness.

The strategically designed Journey to Wellness program is available to more than 33,000 employees. Employees on their personal Journey to Wellness participate in a four phase program which includes the following:

- "Know Your Numbers" screening initiative
- Fitness Challenge and Virgin HealthMiles program
- Weight Management Challenge
- Prevention

Through each of these phases, the Commonwealth is discovering ways to encourage employees to use work as a place to engage in wellness, further empowering employees and their family's to live healthier lives.

■ A Plan for Launching Wellness at Your Worksite

Ten tips to apply when considering a similar strategic worksite wellness program for your organization:

1. **Begin by fully understanding a health management approach to wellness:** This means exploring a program model that reflects a comprehensive operating strategy designed to manage the health and health care of the employee population. This plan should include programs that address individuals at all levels of risk: Health Maintenance (low risk), Lifestyle Management (moderate risk); and Disease Management (high risk).
2. **Gain upper management support:** Remind upper management of the impact of health care costs, lack of

productivity, absenteeism rates, and presenteeism (physically at work, but not working with clarity).

3. **Build a wellness team:** This team should include employees from all levels of employment status and should meet regularly. They will be vital in assisting with activities and in marketing the program to their coworkers.
4. **Collect data:** Utilize a needs assessment tool to gain a closer look at your population (demographics, shift work, hours of operation, socioeconomic status, education, health status, trust in company and culture). Obtain health care claims data if possible. Identify gaps in current health and wellness activities.
5. **Identify funding:** Most companies start small and grow their budget. Don't be discouraged by having a few dollars to contribute towards the program. Get creative.
6. **Craft an operating plan:** Design a brand and determine mission, vision, goals of the program.

Design strategies for creating awareness, educating employees, and empowering them to make behavior change.

7. **Choose appropriate interventions:** Offer a range of programs, activities, and incentives in order to address the various needs of your population. Make it voluntary and fun!
8. **Communicate, motivate, support:** Communicate across all business units regularly using positive, upbeat messaging. Make communication exciting by use of technologies and social media opportunities such as: YouTube, Twitter and Photo Shop. Lead by example and provide rewards and incentives if it fits in your budget.
9. **Create a supportive environment:** Look for opportunities to make good health an integral part of your workplace culture. Implement projects such as healthy cafeteria and vending options, "take the stairs" campaigns, healthy parking spaces, walking meetings, and policies that support healthy behaviors.
10. **Consistently evaluate outcomes:** Set reasonable goals and make adjustments where needed in order to maximize involvement and demonstrate program merit to stakeholders.

For more information about the Commonwealth's Journey to Wellness or the Virgin HealthMiles program, visit our Web site at www.personnel.ky.gov/dei/wellness.

About the Author

Stephanie leads the Journey to Wellness program for over 33,000 Commonwealth of KY state agency employees. As a KY native, it is her passion to empower Kentuckians to live healthier lifestyles.

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