

DO HEALTHY EMPLOYEES MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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How important are healthy employees to the success of your business?

The quality of employees' productivity and performance is impacted by a variety of circumstances, such as morale, family concerns, and health issues, which can often result in absence from work. These issues can be addressed by companies through improved communication and a variety of health-related prevention programs, including wellness education, health screenings and counseling, and regular dental, eye care and hearing examinations.

Wellness Education and Health Screenings

Businesses of all sizes can offer employee wellness tools and health screening options that encourage employees to make the commitment to improving their health. Consider the following ideas:

1. Flu shots or health screening services for cancer, cholesterol, diabetes, Hepatitis B, HIV, or hypertension
2. Smoking cessation or diet counseling and education programs
3. Subsidized fitness programs or allocating time for employees to exercise during the day
4. Lunch-and-learn programs on eating and lifestyle choices.

A variety of health concerns can be identified through regular eye care, dental and hearing examinations.

Eye Care

Employees report that vision is the one sense they value most. A few eye care facts to consider:

- More than 2,000 eye injuries occur daily in the workplace, resulting in employers paying in excess of \$500 million a year for medical bills and workers' compensation expenses.
- About one injury in 10 requires one or more missed workdays for healing and recovery.
- Ten to 20 percent of injuries cause temporary or permanent vision loss.

Comprehensive eye examinations assess the health of employees' eyes for prevention and early detection of medical concerns.

Dental

Across the country, employees are taking days off to cope with problems with their teeth and gums, which can significantly affect business operations. On average, employees annually require 6.1 million days of disability and 12.7 million days of restricted activity due to oral health issues. This amounts to 100 million lost work hours and more than 165,000 workers off the job for an entire year.

Preventive dental care could significantly reduce this loss of productivity and catch problems before they become chronic or severe.

Hearing

Hearing loss is one of the most common occupational injuries in the U.S. More than 30 million workers are regularly exposed to toxic noise. Approximately 2 million people in the U.S. have experienced hearing loss. More than 10 million of impairments are at least partially attributable to damage from exposure to loud sounds, called Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL).

NIHL can be caused by a one-time exposure to a loud sound or a repetition of sounds at various loudness levels over an extended period.

THE VALUE OF HEALTH PREVENTION

Employees are your most valuable asset, and healthy employees tend to be happier, more productive, and have lower healthcare expenses. Consider making health screenings, prevention services, and wellness programs an integral component of their benefits programs and business strategies.

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