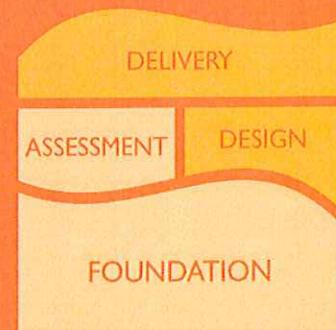


Chapter Nine

Planning Activities & Interventions

“You can’t leave footprints in the sands of time if
you’re sitting on your butt, and who wants to leave
butt prints in the sands of time?”

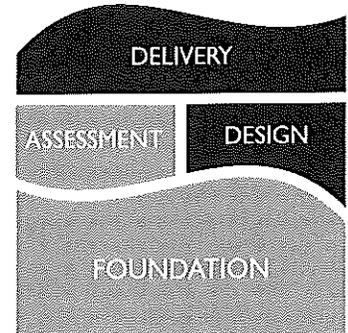
— Bob Moawat



Chapter Nine

Planning Activities & Interventions

Program activities and interventions are the backbone of any wellness program. As you design the elements of your program, carefully select a mix of activities and interventions that are aligned with the health risks of the population, employee interests, and the workplace culture as addressed in Chapter 6, Assessing Program Needs. Much of the work in this chapter goes hand in hand with developing your goals and objectives as described in Chapter 8, Forming an Operating Plan. Here you'll learn to design your program mix to create the right combination of awareness activities, health education or motivational activities, behavior change programs, and environmental or cultural support activities. Be sure to include a regular risk assessment process.



Knowing your audience

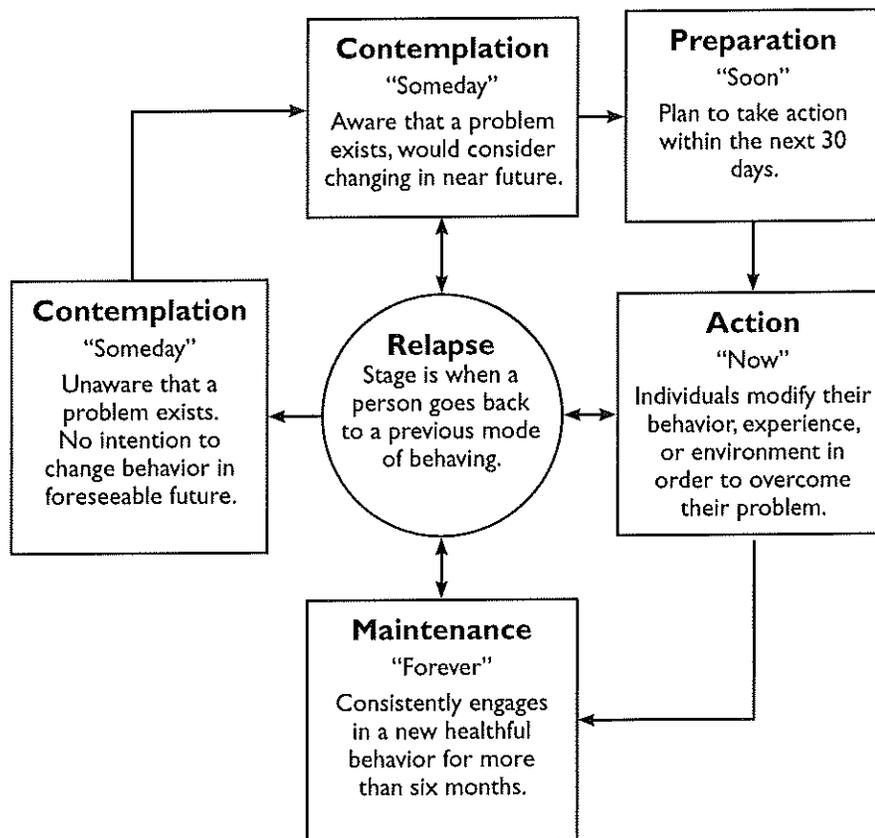
Who is the target audience? Do they have physical limitations? What is their average age? What are they most likely to participate in? How much time do they have? What is the most convenient time for them to participate?

What is the general “stage of readiness” of your target audience?

According to Dr. James Prochaska's Transtheoretical Model of Change, change occurs in a distinct series of stages also known as “Stages of Change Theory”. The Stages of Change Theory recognizes that change is a process, and that certain processes facilitate movement through stages. In practical terms, the figure on the next page depicts the five major stages of Prochaska's model each with a simplified description of the attitudes and characteristics of people in that stage. Failing to recognize the sequential nature of behavior change misses the needs of the majority of potential “self-changers” and can lead to counter-productive programming.

Individuals in the "Now" stage represent no more than 15 – 20% of an available population needing to make change while the "Nevers," "Somedays," and "Soons" represent 80 – 85% of those most likely to change in the foreseeable future.

Stages of change model



Knowing your audience's stage of readiness to change is a key factor when deciding which type of program to provide. You may already have a sense for this or you may need to conduct a formal or informal survey (see Stage of Change Questionnaire).

Stage of change questionnaire

The following questionnaire distributed informally may give you an idea of where the majority of your efforts should be focused. These types of questions may also be included in an employee needs and interest survey or health risk assessment. To keep the responses confidential, provide a drop box or have them returned via interoffice mail.

1. Are you seriously intending to **make healthy behavior change** in the next six months?
2. Are you planning a **healthy behavior change** in the next month?
3. Have you tried to sustain a **healthy behavior change** in the last 12 months?

Pre-contemplation is indicated by a "no" response to #1.

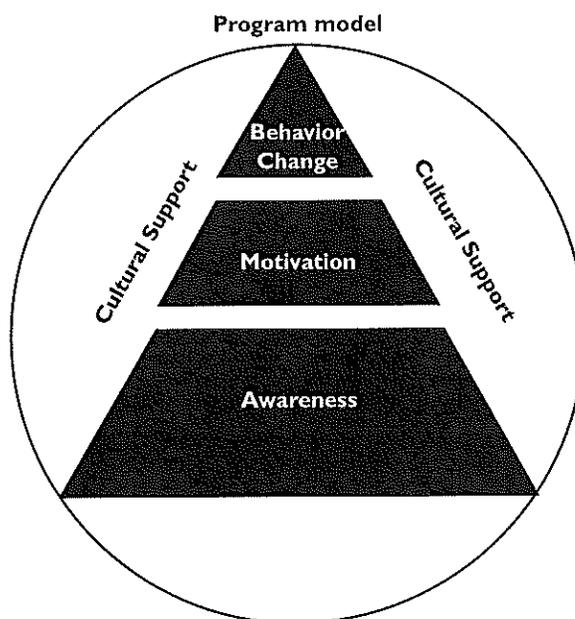
Contemplation is indicated by a "yes" to #1 and "no" to either #2 or #3.

Preparation is indicated by a "yes" to #1, #2, and #3.

To assess readiness for a specific behavior change like increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, or begin a walking program, insert the specific behavior change into each question.

Choosing the right program mix

What activities are most appropriate for my audience? The Program Model illustrates the basic types of program activities and interventions. Activities are divided into four types of programming including Awareness, Motivation, Behavior Change and Cultural Support. Each program type serves a different purpose in the behavior change process.

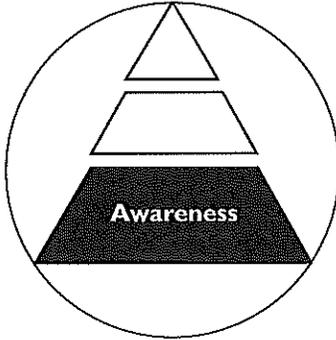


The following pages highlight each step in the behavior change process, and the advantages and disadvantages of offering programs on each of the levels. The formats of wellness programs which best express each type are also identified. It is important to keep in mind that in any group, at any time, people are at various stages of readiness to respond to each type of wellness programming. Some people already have all the information they need; others still need information about basic issues. Some people are ready, willing and able to make behavior changes now – all they need is a little encouragement and support. Others want to wait and see; still others may have tried to make some changes and failed. They need their batteries recharged. Finally, some small portion of the group's members will never change their behavior – no matter what is offered to them.

When you are thinking about wellness programs, keep in mind the need to begin small, think big, and progress slowly. Habits are patterns built up slowly, over a lifetime. Changing habits is also a slow, incremental process. Many small changes, over time, add up to big risk reductions. Since people are at constantly changing states of readiness to change, their needs for awareness, motivation, and behavior change programs are also varied and changing.

Many employers make the mistake of jumping in at the behavior change level – starting too 'big' for most of their employees. While the employer's commitment and concern are commendable, neglecting the awareness and motivational levels of wellness programming often results in smoking cessation programs that are poorly attended, or fitness rooms that are rarely used. So, while the ultimate goal of all wellness programs is behavior change (and programs must be offered at this level to support such change), program planners must also constantly be thinking about how that change can be supported – in the short and the long term – by ongoing awareness and motivation programs.

Many small changes, over time, add up to big risk reductions.



Awareness

- Payroll inserts
- Posters
- Newsletters
- Booklets
- Brochures
- Bulletin boards
- Emails

AWC Resources

- Wellness Newsletter
- Program flyers

People need information to raise their awareness of – and increase their knowledge about – health issues. While information is a necessary part of the behavior change process, it is, on its own, usually not sufficient for most people to accomplish behavior change.

Advantages

Awareness programs can reach everyone, inexpensively. They serve many purposes at the same time: program promotion, visibility, deliver sound information and encourage health awareness. Awareness programs require less staff time to implement and manage. They provide program continuity and can be implemented quickly.

Disadvantages

The awareness level is passive, and the least likely to affect behavior change – although some individuals do act upon information alone.

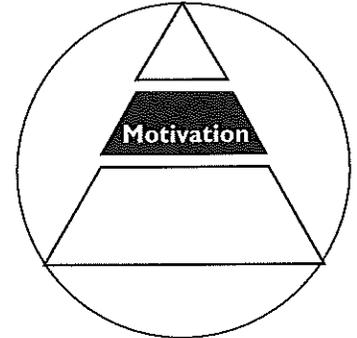
Some people aren't readers, so even though the word gets out, some don't catch it.

Motivation

- Lectures
- Self-instructional programs
- Demonstrations
- Audio-visual media
- Health risk assessments
- Screenings

AWC Resources

- Health questionnaire
- On-site screenings
- Web-based health resources
- Healthy Decisions workshop



Much is sold about “motivating” people to change behavior. The truth is that people only motivate themselves. Wellness programs can enhance and bolster motivation by providing opportunities to personalize information, learn concrete skills, experience success and gain the support of others.

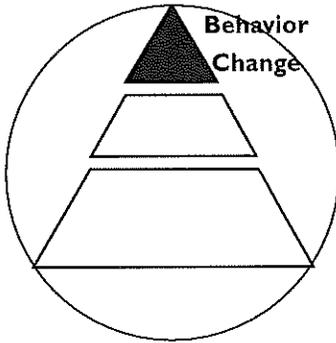
This type of programming aims to change knowledge or attitudes. Motivation implies that the person is getting ready to act upon information or at least may have the intention of doing so. Accepting self-responsibility for personal health practices becomes an important concept at this stage.

Advantages

Motivational activities encourage people to attempt to make changes and act in ways that will promote their personal health and well being. They foster group support of the desired behavior and create an atmosphere conducive to change. Motivational programs also build enthusiasm and support among employees for the wellness program by promoting program identity and visibility. They are less expensive and time consuming than ongoing behavior change classes.

Disadvantages

Motivational programs require greater expenditure of staff time and money. While this type of program does motivate people to act, they may not have the skills yet to perform the desired behavior, and as a consequence their initial attempts may be unsuccessful.



Behavior change

- Ongoing exercise classes
- Multiple session seminars
- Support group activity
- Personalized coaching sessions
- Multiple week campaigns

AWC Resources

- Spring and fall health campaigns
- Healthy Decisions series
- On-line lifestyle programs
- Health coaching
- Free & Clear Quit for Life tobacco cessation program
- Employee Assistance Program
- Nurse Advice Line

This type of programming provides a structured opportunity to practice and participate. Behavior change is the result of conscious action and commitment. Once behavior has changed individuals need support to maintain the new behavior long enough so that it becomes automatic and habitual – an integral part of a new lifestyle. Because we are creatures of habit, it takes a lot of practice and commitment to change before the new behavior actually becomes a “habit.” This stage requires support and reinforcement from other people and even the person’s environment for the behavior change to become a lasting one. While behavior change is the most difficult level of learning, and the hardest to maintain, it is the practice of healthful behaviors that will achieve the goals of improved health and reduced health risk.

Advantages

Behavior change programs produce results that have a measurable effect on: health status, lifestyle change, risk reduction, reduced illness or reduced health care utilization.

Disadvantages

These programs are costly in terms of staff time and resources. They require a greater commitment – from management and employee – of time, dollars and energy.

Cultural support

- Fitness Centers
- Incentive programs
- Workplace policies
- Program facilities
- Ergonomically designed work stations
- Management that supports participation in wellness programs
- Activity clubs, committees or support groups
- Healthy foods available (vending, cafeteria)

AWC Resources

- Sample policies and guidelines
- Tailored electronic messages
- Grants



The environment influences all the other levels of the behavior change pyramid. These activities seek to change the cultural norm of a given group from one that is not supportive to one that supports healthy behaviors. This change is necessary to help the target group sustain its new lifestyle. Group members must feel that others approve of and support their new behavior. Positive cultural change also increases the attractiveness of the wellness program and behavior change to other employees not currently participating.

Advantages

Environmental and cultural support programs help create a sense of employer commitment towards the employee. They also foster a feeling of team spirit among the staff. They give the green light to those who previously would feel awkward about joining in.

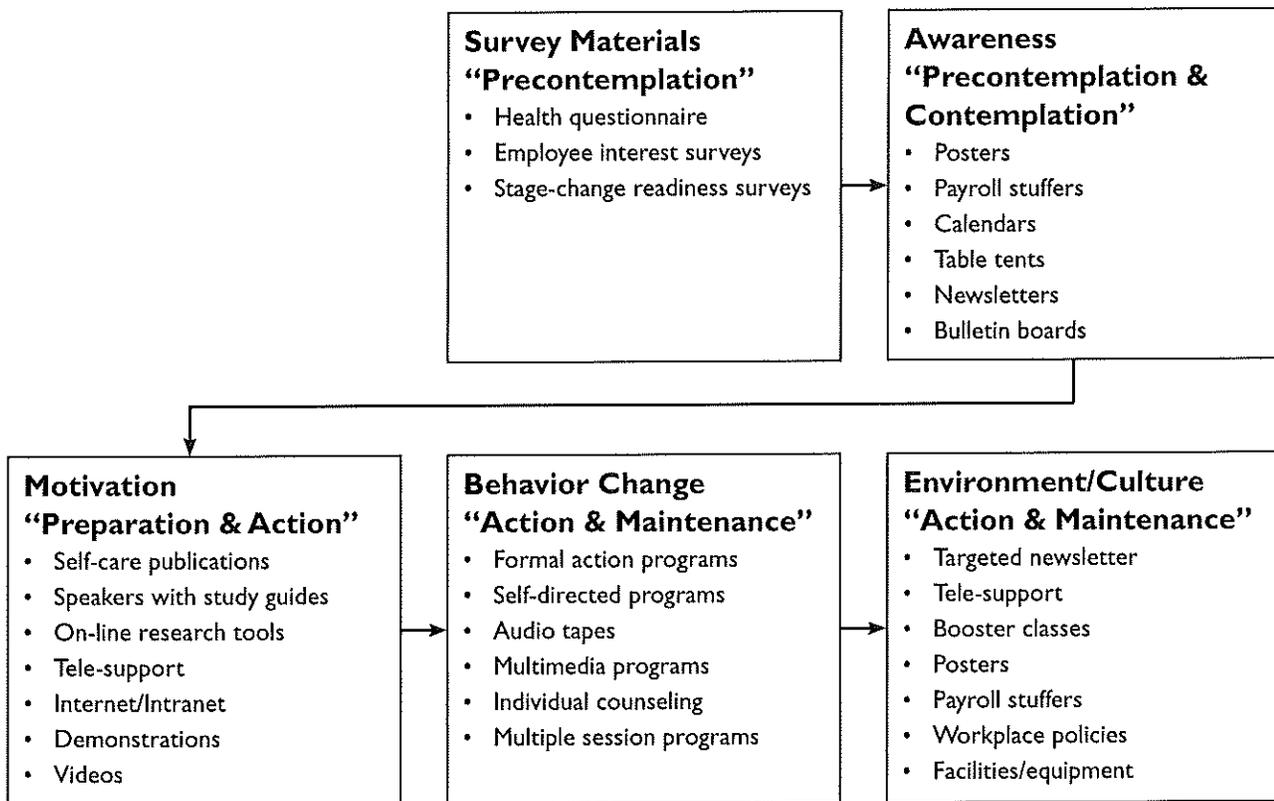
Disadvantages

It takes a great deal of time and energy to change policies. Money is also a large factor in environmental activities such as creating incentive programs, or building program facilities.

Supporting the process of change

When designing health promotion programs, be sure to match your programs to your audience. In a perfect world, you'd want to deliver the right message, to the right people, at the best time, at the appropriate intensity, for an ideal duration. In order to avoid missing the people who may benefit from a wellness program, it is important to offer education and intervention opportunities that target all relevant states. Remember, you'll have the best success with people who are at the preparation and action stages, though people who are at pre-contemplation and maintenance also need your support. The model below outlines programs suited for the various stages of change.

Supporting the process of change



Program planning outcomes

Depending on the level of resources and support, and the outcome of the needs assessment, city workplace wellness programs can take a variety of shapes and sizes. No two are alike.

The table on the next page contains a brief summary of what a program might look like, at varying levels of intensity and resources. It also illustrates the relationship between program intensity and impact

It is important to point out that your program may or may not look exactly like any one of these examples. Available resources, management support, employee interests, budget, schedules, and many other factors will influence your program design.

By working through the program planning process outlined in this planner, you will build a program which best meets the needs of your employees.

Wellness program examples for your city

Profile/ Description	Low Level or Quality of Life Focus <i>No budget, fun activity focus, voluntary, no spouse involvement, limited evaluation, no risk reduction, no incentives, no high risk focus.</i>	Medium Level or Traditional Wellness <i>Small budget, health focused, some risk reduction, small incentives, stand-alone activities, limited integration, use some AWC wellness resources, limited evaluation & spouse involvement.</i>	High Level or Health & Productivity Management <i>Adequate budget, full use of AWC wellness resources, long-term commitment, strong management engagement, strong risk reduction, strong incentives, high touch, rigorous evaluation, personalized programming, supportive environment.</i>
Expected Impact	Minor impact on employees' behaviors or risk factors, Low expectations by management. No expected economic return.	Moderate participation by mostly healthy employees. Moderate expectations for behavior change. Expected cost benefit ratio of 1:3	Expect high participation, significant levels of long-term behavior change and economic return. Expected cost benefit ratio of 1:6
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness articles in city newsletter • Wellness bulletin board • Distribute free pamphlets in lunchroom • Promote community events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness bulletin board • Quarterly wellness newsletter • Periodic email messages • Posters and flyers about monthly topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness bulletin board • Wellness newsletter sent home • Flyers distributed with planned activities • Distribute wellness wallet cards or payroll inserts with each month's health topic • Health web-portal and web-based tools for employees and spouses
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic blood pressure screening in break room • Nutrition speaker at lunch • Heart healthy potluck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual health risk assessment with self-reported biometrics • Video or speaker each quarter on topics employees choose • Semi-annual blood pressure screening in break room, with follow-up materials for medium to high risk participants • Cholesterol screening paid by employees • Self-help programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual health risk assessment with biometrics integrated • Provide free health screenings integrated with health risk assessment • Semi-annual blood pressure screening at all employee stations • Monthly lunch speakers or videos – topics based on identified risk factors • Exercise contest with incentives
Behavior Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a walking club • Conduct a CPR class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-fat eating workshop series • Organize a walking/exercise club with incentives • Conduct a CPR class • Wise health care consumer education video series with self-care book • Promote employee assistance program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalized health coaching • Exercise club with incentives • Weight loss support group with on-site or web-based program • Promote tobacco cessation program 2-3 times throughout the year • Collaboration with safety committee for injury prevention campaign • Healthy Decisions and wise health care consumer campaign with self-care book and web-based tools • Promote employee assistance program through multiple channels
Cultural Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a smoke-free policy • Management not actively involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a smoke-free policy and wellness resolution • Encourage stair usage -- hang posters in stairwells • Offer healthy choices in the vending machine • Small incentives for participation • Spouses invited to some events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt supportive policies around smoking, seat belt use and flex time • Adopt a wellness ordinance • On-site exercise room • Offer health club discounts or policy to exchange sick leave for membership discounts • Strong incentives for engagement in program • Management is actively engaged in program and encourages participation

Ten steps to activity planning

There are 10 steps in the program activity planning process. An 11th and very important step is evaluation, which is covered in Chapter 10. This planning process will feed your annual operating plan as described in Chapter 8.

1. Select program activities
2. Plan program activities
3. Create program planning calendar
4. Establish a budget
5. Choose incentives
6. Delegate roles & responsibilities
7. Select vendors
8. Select program materials
9. Design marketing & promotions
10. Implement program activities

I – Select program activities

You will, in essence, be determining your activities, at the same time you determine your goals and objectives. When choosing topics and specific activities, it is important to choose activities that will entice the employees to become involved. Use the Employee Needs and Interests Survey results and the Management Report from your health questionnaire to help select topics that interest the most people and address your program needs. The following elements may influence where your program begins:

- Your budget
- The available resources
- The employees' expressed needs and interests (from interest surveys or health questionnaire)
- The city's goals
- Management's choice
- A workplace incident that has piqued an employee interest or need
- Community happenings (including National Health Observances Calendar promotions)

NOTE: If you are applying for an AWC Wellness Grant or the WellCity Award, be sure you review the program requirements and include them in your plan.

Below is a list of wellness activity ideas to get you started. Choose topics from this list or come up with some of your own. Resources for many of these ideas are located in the Chapter 9-9.

Health Care Consumer Education

- Self-care book workshop
- Flu-shots and prevention clinic
- Demo of web-based decision support tools
- AWC Healthy Decisions program
- Health and benefits fair
- Newsletter article or email series
- Video series
- Brochures and wallet cards
- Doc-talk table/display with materials

Nutrition/Weight Management

- Weight management class
- Support group
- Cholesterol screening
- “Lunch bunch” brown bag seminars
- Cafeteria program
- Microwave minutes
- Company cookbook
- Team salad bars
- Fruit breaks, baskets
- Healthy vending options
- Low-fat or food group campaign
- Eating disorder support group
- Produce on parade
- Holiday “maintain your weight” challenge
- Restaurant education
- Show Them the Fat – displays depicting fat content in foods
- Shop ‘till You Drop the Pounds – grocery store tour, label reading
- Organic gardening seminar
- Body composition screenings
- Summer salad celebration
- Farmer’s Market promo
- Fad diet seminar by Registered Dietician
- Weight Watchers at Work
- Place scales and BMI charts in restrooms
- What’s for Dinner – rack with recipes, grocery lists, and meal planning

Exercise

- Subsidized memberships
- Listing of area facilities/programs
- Elevoiders – stair climbing
- Poker walk
- Mall walking program
- High school track and trails
- Facilities – showers, etc.
- Team treks
- Walk-a-block trails
- Recreational tournaments
- Bike-to-work or walk-to-work day promotions
- Weekend trips/tourneys with family
- Exercise campaigns
- How to select equipment
- Running maps
- Biking maps
- Desk Exercises
- Fit over forty club
- Tennis shoe Tuesday
- Exercise logs
- Flexibility/fitness testing
- Team competitions
- Destination map club
- Follow American Heart Association’s Start! Fit Friendly Company guidelines
- Walking program
- Annual picnic games
- Group memberships
- Geocaching
- Bicycle tune-up clinic
- Flexible work arrangements
- Install bike racks
- Bike check-out program
- Stretch breaks, pre-work
- Promote community leagues
- Enroll employee teams in Parks & Recreation leagues or Dragonboat races

Stress/Depression Management

- Comedy hour – stress fest
- Humorous newsletter articles
- Video and audio tape library
- Time management seminars
- Follow Psychologically Healthy Workplace guidelines
- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) seminar
- Spring cleaning – office clean-up day
- Relaxation room
- Tai Chi classes or demos
- Stretching or walking breaks
- Relaxation class
- Promote EAP & community resources
- Detour from Stress display – from AWC Library
- Stress journals/diaries
- Massage breaks
- Better sleep campaign
- Resiliency training
- Retirement/financial planning seminar
- Holiday survival kits – speaker, tips, flyers

Cardiovascular Disease

- Promote tobacco cessation resources
- Show them the money – visuals with annual cost of smoking
- Go Red for Women campaign
- Be Sweet to Your Heart – Valentine's Day heart health tips
- Blood pressure house calls – traveling blood pressure checks
- What's Cookin' – heart healthy cooking class
- Heart Healthy Cook-Off with judging and recipes

Miscellaneous

- Health questionnaire
- Brown bag seminars
- News articles
- E-mail wellness tips
- Wellness intranet page
- Videos
- Guest speakers
- Dental health campaign
- Fire safety campaigns
- Ergonomic assessment
- Health resource room
- Self-help learning
- CPR/first aid course
- Hearing test
- Cancer screenings
- Blood pressure screening
- Back class
- Passports to health
- Seat belt campaign
- Well day-off incentive policy
- Substance abuse prevention

2 – Plan program activities

The remaining steps in the design stage (developing a budget, creating a program timeline, selecting vendors, and delegating responsibilities) will be done approximately at the same time. Program planning worksheets are provided in the Chapter 9 exhibits to help you pull these pieces together (and make it easy to complete your annual operating plan.) Be sure to make a number of copies, so you and your wellness committee members can use them to complete your program design activities. You may find the format convenient for presenting final program plans to your manager or city council as well.

Program planning worksheets include:

- Exhibit 9-1: Program Planning Calendar
- Exhibit 9-2: Wellness Program Planning & Design Worksheet
- Exhibit 9-3: Activity Planning Worksheet
- Exhibit 9-4: Awareness Program Checklist
- Exhibit 9-5: Motivational Program Checklist
- Exhibit 9-6: Behavior Change Program Checklist

3 – Create program planning calendar

A program planning calendar is a big picture of what will happen over the next twelve months. It should include all wellness program activities and any other events that may conflict with, support or otherwise influence your program.

Include items such as:

- Newsletter distributions
- National or state health observance days
- Staff parties and picnics
- Annual community events (health fairs, fun runs)
- Benefits open enrollment periods
- Heavy workload cycles
- Quarterly staff meetings
- Mandatory safety meetings

Remember that you can't do everything for everyone at once! Plan a few activities from each level of program implementation (awareness, motivation, behavior change, and cultural support) each quarter – then build upon these. You can move up the behavior change triangle or add new content areas – or both – in the future. As you sketch out the timeline, take into consideration:

- Are there big breaks between program offerings?
- Is periodic communication planned to assure program continuity and presence?
- Do most of your programs happen all at once?
- Do programs fall during heavy workload cycles?
- Should certain topics be presented in a specific order?
- Should topics be presented along with the Health Observance Calendar?

There are three especially good times to begin a program:

1. In the fall when many activities are limited and people are looking for new winter activities
2. January 1 – to capitalize on New Year's resolutions
3. In the early spring when people are feeling spring's energy and are also facing the swimsuit season.

The Program Planning Calendar in Exhibit 9-1 helps you establish a monthly plan for your wellness program that includes dates and major events.

The Wellness Program Planning and Design Worksheet in Exhibit 9-2 has an area for you to describe the wellness activities you plan to offer during the year and include how you will promote and evaluate the activities and whether you will offer incentives for participation. Remember promotion and incentives create visibility and increase anticipation.

Schedule activities

Key factors for maximizing employee participation are time and place. Both have to be convenient for the people you would like to attend. Remember- advance planning counts here. You may need to reserve some meeting areas months in advance. Be certain the space, your presenter, audiovisuals and educational materials that are needed are available for the time you wish to do your activity.

4 – Establish a program budget

Setting the program budget is an important part of the design process. As you gain experience, you'll be better able to predict the entire program costs – the obvious and the hidden – more accurately.

To estimate a budget before you begin, have a committee member take responsibility for calling the vendors and pricing the materials and instructors you will be using. Decide whether you want to include indirect costs (your own time, or the cost of copying program announcements) as well as direct costs (instructor's fees, posters, brochures, books, and equipment) in your budgeting. This will give you a ballpark figure for the types of activities you are considering. Later, as your plan takes more solid shape, you can capture exact costs.

Low cost options

Don't assume you can't afford an instructor, service or materials because your budget is limited. There are many ways to fund your program and obtain materials and services at low or no out-of-pocket cost. Listed below are some ideas on how to run a program with a limited budget.

- **Access AWC Wellness Works resources**, available to AWC Trust members, to help stretch your dollar. For more information visit the AWC Wellness Works web site at www.awcnet.org/wellness. A list of resources is also included in Exhibit 9-9.
- **Contact non-profit health agencies**. They often offer materials and services at a low cost, or for free.
- **Look toward your local, county, state and federal health departments**. Often they provide information free of charge on many health topics.
- **Research your city's training or safety budgets and programs**. Often materials and resources can be shared because they cover similar topics.
- **Barter**; find employees with special talents or expertise. Trade talents and time.
- **Ask in-house support departments**, such as IT, Parks and Recreation, Communications, etc. if they can do work for you at a lesser cost than going outside.
- **Contact your local colleges and vocational institutions**. Students may be available to do non-invasive screenings, such as blood pressure screenings and fitness testing. You may even be able to get a student intern for a short period of time.
- **Create a budget** by holding a healthy bake sale, or by charging entry fees for some programs.
- **Use your imagination!**

5 – Choose incentives

We strongly recommend you build some incentives into your wellness program design. Incentives do more than reward participants-- they stimulate and motivate participation. The emphasis is on informed choice and helping to support and encourage people who want to change. Coercion, overt pressure, and preaching have no place in a health promotion program. Successful workplace wellness incentive programs have the following attributes:

- **Are tied to your program goals and objectives.**
- **Simple to understand** and easy to administer.
- Include both **intrinsic and extrinsic rewards** and recognition. Recognition alone can be a strong motivator.
- **Value of the incentive is appropriate for the required behavior.** \$25 is probably not enough to motivate someone to engage in a long-term behavior, but may increase health questionnaire completion rates.
- **Designed for the individual;** allowing each participant his/her own personalized goals.
- Includes **rewards for employees who already are healthy**, as well as for those employees who wish to make changes in their health practice patterns.
- The **structure is fair**, affordable and effective.
- Support **family participation.**
- Use **appropriate, positive incentives** to encourage healthy habits, rather than using negative actions.
- Are **compatible with the wellness program's overall design** and philosophy.
- Rewards are given for **participation or effort.**
- Are **not always costly:** they may not cost anything at all.

Other considerations

- **What type of incentive will motivate your employees?** Refer to the results of your Needs and Interest Survey.
- **How often do your employees need to receive a reward** to stay motivated and engaged?
- **What other types of incentives are in place** for performance, safety practices, etc?
- **What percentage of participation have you experienced** with other wellness offerings?
- **What level of participation** are you expecting?
- Are you going to **link wellness to the benefit plan?**
- Are you going to **offer just one incentive one time?**
- Would you **consider offering engagement incentives throughout the year** plus a larger incentive at the completion of the year?
- **What is your total budget for incentives?** Have you predicted your budget based on expected participation?
- **Is the incentive program clearly explained and communicated** to all levels of employees? Communication of the incentive and how to earn it is as important as the incentive itself.
- **Have you considered every angle?** What are you doing for employees not enrolled in the health plan? What about HIPAA? What about the IRS?
- How **will the incentives be tracked?**
- **When and how will the incentive be delivered?** Timing is everything!

Expected outcomes

Experience has shown there is a relationship between the amount of the incentive and participation and engagement rates.

Small token incentives of t-shirts, water bottles, etc. can be expected to result in a 30% participation rate. Larger incentives of \$100 – \$150 may result in participation of up to 50-65%, while significant participation rates of 80-90% are only achievable with strong policies, and incentives that are tied to the benefit plan design, and are valued at \$150 – \$300 per employee per year.

Balancing HIPAA regulatory requirements and wellness incentives

The final rules on HIPAA (Health Insurance Privacy and Accountability Act) non-discrimination were published in December 2006. The Final Rules established two types of health plan-linked wellness programs – those that require “participation only” with no requirement for results, and those that require the individual to meet a standard or result (“standard-based”). Participation-only wellness programs do not need to meet any additional requirements. Standard-based wellness programs must meet five additional requirements:

- 1. Limits on size of incentive reward.** The combined incentive reward amount must not exceed 20% of the total cost of the applicable health plan coverage.
- 2. Program must promote health and/or prevent disease.** The wellness program must reasonably be capable of improving the health of participants or preventing disease in participants.
- 3. Annual qualification process.** Each similarly situated eligible individual must have at least an annual opportunity to qualify for the incentive reward.
- 4. Offered to all similarly situated individuals.** Includes providing alternative standards and waiver opportunities if it is unreasonably difficult or medically inadvisable for the individual to meet the standard.
- 5. Full disclosure of alternative standards and waiver opportunity.** Program information materials need to disclose the availability of alternative standards and the waiver opportunity.

For more information on HIPAA as it relates to wellness programs and the other regulatory issues see the article in Exhibit 9-7.

Readers are encouraged to secure formal legal advice concerning their own program design and operational issues.

6 – Delegate roles & responsibilities

The number of tasks may seem overwhelming – although none are especially difficult to perform. The key to success – and to the coordinator's sanity – is the ability to delegate the various tasks to different members of the committee.

Committee members can:

- Conduct surveys and assessments of employees and community resources
- Request samples and review informational materials
- Interview prospective program personnel and vendors
- Gather budget information
- Attend to the details of scheduling
- Design the overall program
- Select incentives
- Plan and implement the program promotion

Use them well – for large and small tasks. Remember to reward your committee members too. They need some rejuvenation and periodic motivational to practice what they preach.

This is also a good time to ask non-committee members to do simple one-time tasks. This helps avoid committee burnout. It will also help get more employees involved. Many employees are willing to volunteer for a one-time commitment, even though they are unwilling to commit to working on a committee year round. One-time volunteers may also be a source of future committee members. People may find volunteering to be fun and non-intimidating once they try it out a little at a time. When delegating, be clear about *who* needs to do *what*, and by *when*.

7 – Select vendors

Once you've determined what you want to do, when, for whom, where, and how much, you're ready to finalize the Who and What of your program: the actual materials and/or personnel.

Four areas should be considered in assessing the potential of a program provider at your worksite:

1. Previous track record.
2. Actual plan for delivery of services.
3. Program follow-up and evaluation plan.
4. Potential for program replication beyond the first year.

To evaluate the track record of a consultant or provider organization, you should weigh several factors:

- What is the extent of their experience?
- How many total programs have they completed?
- What is their track record in organizations with size and characteristics similar to yours?

If the vendor is not well known to you or to other members of your committee, be sure that you get and follow up on references. Make your best selection based on your intuition and the available resources. Then, ask employees to evaluate all program personnel. Over time, you'll build up a cadre of capable and popular program personnel.

8 – Select program materials

You will want to review wellness materials before you order them in quantity. Most suppliers will send you a single sample. Some things to look at when reviewing materials are:

Content

- Substance
- Validity
- Balance
- Authority
- Integrity

Is the material valid? Is the author/organization authoritative? Is the point of view balanced? Is there a good amount of information for your audience – neither too detailed nor too sketchy?

Presentation

- Audience
- Appropriateness
- Reading level

Will your employees be able to read this material? Will they understand it? Will they enjoy it? Choose materials for lay audiences that are written at or near the sixth-grade reading level.

Writing quality

- Clarity
- Tone
- Organization

Is the presentation of the information clear, lively and non-patronizing? Is the action the reader is supposed to take very clear? The information provided should support the reader in taking the action.

Format

- Shape and size
- Eye appeal

Is the piece attractive? Packaging is as important to the “selling” of health promotion as it is to the selling of soap and cereal.

9 – Design marketing and promotions

It's not enough to simply plan the best possible wellness program; you've got to get the word out so employees will know what's happening. Program promotion is an integral part of the program itself; often it can offer a great deal of education at the same time that it advertises a coming event.

Think like an advertiser

Use your imagination and all the media and communication channels available to you to let people know what you've got planned for them and why they should attend. Here are some useful promotion tips:

- Use incentives for **enrollment, engagement and completion**.
- Provide some sort of **consistent communication** about your overall program throughout the year to create a continual presence.
- When promoting a specific activity, **use three to five different methods of promotion**. This makes certain that everyone will hear or see your promotion somewhere.
- Try promoting your program and activities in **ways other than the ordinary** to catch people's attention like table tents, post cards, bathroom stalls, etc.
- Be tasteful and **do not use sarcasm or negative wording** or images to convey your messages.
- Use promotion techniques that will **create a supportive environment** for employees considering or trying to make a change.
- Use **popular TV shows, movies, or seasonal themes** to promote campaigns.

Remember, the purpose of promotion is to:

- Raise employees' awareness of – and enthusiasm for – the worksite wellness program.
- Stimulate – and maintain – high levels of participation.
- Keep the program visible – and viable – over time.

To help maximize your participation levels, keep in mind the following:

- **City vs. employee time.** Depending on the activity and management's willingness to present activities on city time.
- **Safety meetings or staff meetings.** These may be opportune times to present short educational talks, videos, etc.
- **Retiree and/or family participation.** Both these groups may be insured by your city and you may want to schedule certain events so they may participate, too. You may want to charge fees for non-employees to cover any additional costs.
- **Multiple shifts and sites.** Be sure not to neglect certain populations because they work different times or at remote sites. Find creative ways to offer them programs as well. You may want to take a program to them, instead of them having to come to you.
- **Workload cycle.** Be sure to take into consideration the workload cycle of the employees, and entire city. If the end of the month is a crunch time, or one day of the week is always reserved for certain activities, don't schedule activities in conflict with them.
- **Break/lunch time.** These are good times and break rooms are good places to promote your program. It's also a great place to do short activities.
- **R.S.V.P. 's.** Use these for activities that are costly or will include presenters from outside in order to insure a minimum participation level to make the activity successful. If the activity doesn't draw enough participants, evaluate the reason and either reschedule it for a more convenient time or cancel it if there isn't enough interest. If you need to cancel a program, try to find a way to offer an alternative to those who signed up for it.

Now that the program is well designed, it's time to get your program off to a lively and very visible start. Your program kick-off should be **DYNAMIC** and **ATTENTION-GETTING**. It should communicate the city's commitment, preview the upcoming activities, and leave employees eager to take the next steps.

Remember to use your imagination and be creative with all forms of communication to pique the interest of employees. Discuss with your committee strategies you want to use to announce your program. The following are basic ideas for kicking off your program:

Wellness program kick-off group meetings

Announcing the program during group meetings is a very effective way of communicating program information and stimulating interest. The tone of the meeting should be up-beat and relaxed, and there should be opportunity for employees to participate in the discussion of activities.

For best results, plan ahead:

- Schedule several employee group meetings at **times and locations that are most convenient** for maximum attendance.
- Distribute flyers about a week ahead of time to announce the dates, times and location of the meetings. Be sure to **invite employees to bring their lunch if it's during the noon hour**, and let them know if refreshments are being served.
- As an added reminder, **distribute the flyer again** the morning of the employee meeting to all work stations.
- **Invite your mayor or city manager** to welcome employees at the kick-off meetings. Ask your mayor to express the city's interest and commitment to promoting employee wellness.
- If you plan to use a video, be sure to **preview it ahead of time** and arrange to have it available at your location for the kick-off meetings. Remember to **arrange for the necessary equipment**.
- Decide the **best way to use city/employee time** for the kick-off. While "city time" for kick-off increases attendance and underscores the city's commitment to the wellness initiative, be sensitive to the city's policy regarding use of city time for wellness. Perhaps your meeting could be held partially on city and partially on employees' personal time. Or, employees could be offered an **incentive to attend the kick-off program on their own time** (right after work, for example).

Kick-off meeting agenda

A typical meeting of about one hour would include:

1. A welcome from the mayor or city manager and an **overview of the program goals** and the background that led up to the program being developed.
2. An **audiovisual presentation**, such as a video or Power Point presentation on wellness.
3. **Discussion of specific programs** planned for the upcoming year.
4. Provide **handouts or give-away promotional items** that publicize the program (calendars, T-shirts, buttons).
5. **An activity** such as practicing a relaxation or stretching exercise, blood pressure checks, etc.
6. An **opportunity for questions** and answers about the program.
7. An opportunity to **sign-up for more information or to pre-register** for scheduled programs.
8. An opportunity to **sign-up for the employee wellness committee**.

Formally introduce the program with a "Launch letter".

If time, space and logistics make it impossible for you to reach all the employees at your site with a meeting format, you can still create excitement and pave the way for your program by sending advance notice of the activities through the mail. Your letter should be signed by the mayor or city manager and identify you as the program coordinator and person to turn to with questions. The letter should contain:

- Description of the program components.
- Time table for program implementation.
- Rationale for the city's involvement in health matters.
- Identification of the program coordinator with phone number and invitation to ask questions, and offer suggestions.
- Invitation to join the wellness committee.
- Sharing of hopes for the program.
- Statement that the program is voluntary and information is confidential.

Although you need to cover a good deal of information, the letter should be brief, no more than two pages, concise and appropriate to the reading levels of the majority of your employees. (See the sample Program Launch Letter in Exhibit 9-8.)

Introduce the program with a health risk assessment.

Health risk assessments make excellent wellness program kick-off activities. They may also be used successfully later in a wellness program's development, when employee interest has already been whetted.

Displays

Set up several colorful and interesting displays at various locations that will catch employees' attention as they pass by. Locate them in well-trafficked areas, such as cafeterias, lounges, waiting areas, or near coffee machines. Have materials and literature available for employees to take with them that further describes the overall program or specific scheduled activities.

Work station drops

Distribute packets of information about the wellness program and forthcoming activities. Include a few promotional/incentive items to stimulate interest and communicate a sense of fun; e.g. redeemable coupons for an upcoming seminar or a magnet to post wellness information and newsletters. Use props and distribute healthy give-a-ways to distribute with the written information. A basket of apples delivered to each work area – or an apple deposited on each desk – will underscore the message. If you can, try to deliver them yourself; this will add a personal touch that motivates interest and will possibly result in a few volunteers for your wellness committee!

Additional promotional ideas

- **Employee needs and interests survey.** Used when starting a program or periodically to be sure the program is still meeting the needs and interests of employees. A sample survey is provided in Exhibit 6-2.
- **Program logo and theme.** May be used on all correspondence and promotion pieces to provide continual program visibility.
- **Print.** Posters, flyers, bulletin boards, newsletters, desk drops, letters to the home, payroll stuffers.
- **Interoffice communication systems.** Intercom announcements, interoffice mail, word-of-mouth, voice mail, email, staff meeting announcements.
- **Common employee gathering places.** Use clever names and post quick messages. "Time Clock Tickers", "Bathroom Buddies" or "Stall Talk", cafeteria table tents, "Water Cooler Quickies", "Microwave Minutes".
- **Origami.** Fortune teller origami desk toppers used for promoting an activity or general on-going publicity.

- **Picture of health.** Employee interviews and/or profiles in city newsletter.
- **Produce on parade.** Handing out fruit and vegetables with nutritional facts and an educational message and/or promotion of an upcoming activity.
- **Stickers, buttons, balloons.** Advertising teams, a given activity, or a personal recognition for an accomplishment in the program.
- **Games/contests.** Educational campaigns that help convey a health message and offer a fun way of getting involved in a new health habit.
- **Annual day celebration.** An event in honor of a city-wide annual celebration or a national health observance day.
- **Community events.** Fun runs, fund raising events for a community charity, and/or fund raising for the program.
- **Incentives.** Traveling department, site, or shift awards, or personal recognition awards.
- **Displays and demonstrations.** This may include a health fair.
- **Potlucks.** Use a holiday or health related theme – invite healthy recipes only.

Marketing basics

Remember to include the following pieces of information when developing communication pieces.

- Event title
- Date
- Time
- Location
- Who should attend
- What you'll learn
- For more information:

Get your program off on the right foot by taking the time to introduce it carefully and by making it fun and exciting. Make a big deal out of it! Reduce employee's anxieties to the best of your ability and share your own enthusiasm. This is an innovative, important new program you are embarking upon, and everyone has a lot to gain from it.

10 – Implement program activities

Employees are usually very short of time and find it hard to give up personal or city time to attend poorly run activities. The following are tips for facilitating activities that will help insure a smooth program and satisfied attendees who will want to participate in future events.

Be prepared

Have your means of evaluation ready. Put a committee member in charge of collecting the needed information.

- Have the room, chairs, and any physical locations checked out and set up prior to the beginning of the activity.
- Set up any audiovisual equipment beforehand, have the volume adjusted, and check the lighting needs. If possible, have back up equipment available.
- Confirm the speaker or presenter; have a committee member in charge of making sure their needs are met so the speaker knows where and when to be ready.
- Be sure there are enough handouts or materials for the number of attendees anticipated.
- If there will be refreshments, have a committee person oversee the food and/or drink to refresh supplies or clean up any leftovers, spills, etc.

Be there

Be involved, if the persons involved in planning the activity don't participate, employees may perceive it as a negative message – it must not be important enough or good enough for committee members to get involved. Also, encourage management to get involved. This will show management supports the city's program.

Thank everyone

Thank the speakers, planners, attendees, and those who made it possible for the program to exist. After the program has concluded, report its success in the next employee newsletter; and send a short recap of the activities to management. Include information gathered with your evaluation, such as participation level, participant satisfaction, and quotes from participants. Use this information as part of your promotion for the next activity.

Have fun

No one ever quit participating because they were having too much fun!

Exhibit 9-1

Program Planning Calendar

Sample

	Health Observance	Awareness	Motivational	Behavior Change	Cultural Support
January	Healthy Weight Week Blood Donor Month	Host a blood drive	Health Education Seminar: "Solutions to Your Resolutions"	Promote Weight Watchers @ Work	Place scales in common areas with BMI charts
February	Heart Month Wise Consumer Month	Show a video on heart disease.	Conduct blood pressure screening	Promote a healthy heart cooking class	Purchase a blood pressure machine for each building
March	Nutrition Month Colorectal Cancer	Send pamphlet on age specific preventive screenings to all employees via payroll stuffer	Conduct nutrition consultations with a RD	Implement a wellness challenge such as Colorful Choices	Bring a fruit and veggie tray to staff meetings

_____ [Insert Year] Program Planning Calendar

	Health Observance	Awareness	Motivational	Cultural Support	Behavior Change
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
June					
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					

Exhibit 9-2

Wellness Program Planning & Design Worksheet

For every program, complete the planning steps below. This process will help you organize your program plan and deliver a high quality program. Make copies as needed.

Program Name: _____

Program Type: _____

Program Date: _____

Program Description: _____

Program Objective: _____

Program Cost(s): _____

Program Marketing and Promotions: 1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

Incentives: _____

Program Evaluation Tool:

Wellness Committee Responsible: _____

Exhibit 9-3

Activity Planning Checklist

Activity topic: _____

Date(s) of activity: _____

Time(s): _____

Six to eight weeks before activity:

- Confirm program dates and times with supervisor.
- Contact instructor/facilitator; interview/approve.
- Confirm instructor/facilitator in writing.
- Schedule site/room for program. Confirm with memo.
- Preview any films, videos to be shown.

Four to six weeks before activity:

- Meet with employee wellness committee to discuss program. Delegate reasonable tasks for promotion/preparation.
- Request or order materials, supplies, equipment:
 - Chairs, tables, wastebasket, refreshments
 - Pencils and note paper
 - Surveys, applications, or other forms
 - Attendance forms
 - Hand-outs for participants
- Audiovisual aids, and equipment such as: screen, TV monitor, VCR, DVD player, extension cord, overhead projector, flip chart and colored pens, white board & pens

Two to four weeks before program:

- Announce and publicize program.
- Announcement letter, memo, or flyer
- Posters displayed
- Payroll inserts distributed
- Newsletter article ready to be published
- Bulletin board display up
- Orientation scheduled (if necessary)
- Arrange for duplication of course materials as needed

One week before program:

- Make verbal confirmation with program facilitator.
- Reconfirm space, refreshments.
- Assemble materials, audiovisuals, equipment.

Day before program or morning of program:

- Distribute program reminders (flyers) to employee work stations or desks.
- Announce program over PA system if available.
- Set up room with tables, chairs and AV equipment.

Exhibit 9-5

Motivational Program Checklist

Topic: _____

Issue to be addressed: _____

Responsible staff member: _____

Program format selected: _____

Program presenter identified: _____

Letter of agreement with presenter completed: _____

Fee to be charged participants?: _____

Pre-negotiation required?: _____

Program promotion planned: _____

Promotional materials designed: _____

Target date to begin promotion: _____

Promotion implemented: _____

Program location selected and reserved: _____

Audiovisual or other equipment reserved: _____

Support materials needed: _____

 Audiovisual: _____

 Printed: _____

 Evaluation forms: _____

All supplies ordered: _____

All supplies on hand: _____

Room arrangements specified: _____

Room arrangements completed: _____

Staff briefed on program particulars: _____

Program conducted: _____

Number in attendance: _____

Program evaluated: _____

Program expenses: _____

 Presenter: _____

 Supplies: _____

 Equipment: _____

 Staff time: _____

Behavior Change Program Checklist

Program: _____

Responsible staff member: _____

Number of sessions: _____

Length of each session: _____

Date of each session: _____

Program facilitator identified: _____

Program facilitator contracted: _____

Program fee established: _____

Registration procedure established: _____

Staff briefed: _____

Promotion planned: _____

Promotional materials developed: _____

Promotion conducted: _____

Room selected: _____

Room reserved for all sessions: _____

Person responsible for room set up and breakdown:

What city must provide for each session: _____

What facilitator will provide: _____

Number of participants targeted for program: _____

Program evaluation designed: _____

To track attrition rates, record the number of participants attending each session:

Session: _____

Participation rate: _____

Program evaluation designed: _____

Program evaluation implemented at last session: _____

Participant response to course: _____

Behavioral follow-up schedule:

3 months _____
(date) (by)

6 months _____
(date) (by)

12 months _____
(date) (by)

Exhibit 9-7

Balancing HIPAA Regulatory Requirements and Wellness Incentives

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As worksite wellness gains traction in the business community, a likely corollary will be increased focus on regulatory compliance and the evolution of best practices. The recent Final Rules on HIPAA nondiscrimination published on December 13, 2006, provide an opportunity to focus on the broader regulatory context affecting worksite wellness efforts.

Setting the Stage

Employer wellness efforts are expanding in most areas of the country as employers realize that financial incentives for program participation and wellness activities are an indispensable aspect of effective programs.¹ But the corollary to this trend is the associated regulatory issues that are surfacing. The federal departments of Treasury (DOT), Labor (DOL), and Health and Human Services (HHS) recently announced a final set of rules governing wellness programs and the use of health plan-related incentives as a part of the nondiscrimination prohibition found in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).²

Compounding the resolution of these issues is a more basic conundrum. A definite subset of regulatory issues does not carry clear yes-and-no answers. Employers find themselves faced with areas of law and regulations where questions of compliance might best be labeled “maybe.” These areas are often associated with innovations in programming or in linking wellness to benefits in a new way. When this occurs, employers may find that their legal counsel leans toward

the risk-averse end of the spectrum and rules against the proposed innovation simply because the situation is not clear or is nuanced in a potentially undesirable fashion. Much is at stake in these situations. Taking a risk-averse position may mean not reaching employees and their family members with wellness programs. The opportunity costs to the organization and the individuals involved may be sizable

The information provided here is not intended as legal advice. Our perspective offers information on the regulatory issues involved, and introduces ways these issues can be addressed without undermining the behavioral effectiveness of the programs involved. Readers are encouraged to secure formal legal advice concerning their own program design and operational issues.

Final HIPAA Rules for Wellness Program Incentives

Wellness program staff are generally aware of the prohibitions affecting health plan coverage and cost sharing as they relate to health status factors and HIPAA's non-discrimination prohibitions. The issue first surfaced in Title I of HIPAA, in language from the statute itself:

"...a group health plan, and a health insurance issuer offering group health insurance coverage, may not establish rules for eligibility (including continued eligibility) of any individual to enroll under the terms of the plan based on any of the following health status related factors in relation to the individual or a dependent of the individual:

- (A) Health status
- (B) Medical condition (including both physical and mental illnesses)
- (C) Claims experience
- (D) Receipt of healthcare
- (E) Medical history
- (F) Genetic information
- (G) Evidence of insurability (including conditions arising out of acts of domestic violence)
- (H) Disability"

At the same time, Congress did not want to stop the many promising efforts to use health plan-related incentives to encourage participation in worksite health promotion or wellness programs. It added language to the law saying that nothing in the first paragraph shall be construed "...to prevent a group health plan from establishing premium discounts or rebates or modifying otherwise applicable copayments or deductibles in return for adherence to programs of health promotion and disease prevention." Parallel language was also included in the law for individual health insurance plans.

This created the need to place parameters or limits around incentives that are to be used with health promotion and disease prevention programs. This was done to prevent these types of incentives from being used to surreptitiously injure or penalize individuals for something that they were perceived to have limited control over, such as a smoking addiction.

After extensive discussion and interim rulings between 1997 and 2006, the responsible federal agencies (DOT, DOL, and HHS) produced Final Rules that constitute what we believe is a reasonable course of action in implementing the original statutory language. In doing so, the implementing agencies of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA), and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) walked a fine line between protecting employees and unnecessarily limiting employers and health plans in their implementation of effective wellness programs and health plan-related linkages.

The Final Rules established two types of health plan-linked wellness programs – those that require “participation only” with no requirement for results, and those that require the individual to meet a standard or result (“standard-based”). Participation-only wellness programs do not need to meet any additional requirements. Standard-based wellness programs must meet five additional requirements:

- 1. Limits on size of incentive reward.** The combined incentive reward amount must not exceed 20% of the total cost of the applicable health plan coverage. For example, if the reward is available only to employees, then the employee-only cost of health plan coverage is used. If employees and spouses both can qualify for the incentive reward, the total cost of the family coverage can be used in computing the 20% limit.
- 2. Program must promote health and/or prevent disease.** The wellness program must reasonably be capable of improving the health of participants or preventing disease in participants.
- 3. Annual qualification process.** Each similarly situated eligible individual must have at least an annual opportunity to qualify for the incentive reward.
- 4. Offered to all similarly situated individuals.** Includes providing alternative standards and waiver opportunities if it is unreasonably difficult or medically inadvisable for the individual to meet the standard.
- 5. Full disclosure of alternative standards and waiver opportunity.** Program information materials need to disclose the availability of alternative standards and the waiver opportunity.

HIPAA and other federal legislation related to worker health

HIPAA: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, enacted in 1996

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act, enacted in 1990

ADEA: Age Discrimination in Employment Act, enacted in 1967

PDA: Pregnancy Discrimination Act, enacted in 1978 as an amendment to the sex discrimination section of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

COBRA: Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, enacted in 1986

ERISA: Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974

MHPA: Mental Health Parity Act, enacted in 1996

Program Design and Management Strategies

There are many program design and management issues arising from HIPAA and other federal laws. Worksite wellness program managers and sponsors must address these regulatory issues or risk opening the program and their organizations to legal or regulatory challenge. The Final Rules for wellness programs highlight the major wellness program regulatory issues associated with HIPAA. These include:

- The use of participation-only incentive criteria or standard-based incentive criteria. That choice triggers the application of the five additional requirements identified.
- The maintenance of all protected health information (PHI) or individually identified health information (IIHI) in a manner consistent with all provisions of the HIPAA privacy regulations.
- The adoption and use of all unique identifiers as they are officially promoted by the federal agencies involved.
- The roll-over of medical savings account (MSA) balances into health savings accounts (HSAs), particularly if additional HSA amounts are attached to wellness bonus provisions under a Section 125 cafeteria plan provision.

If the nondiscrimination provisions of HIPAA are not adequately addressed by an employer or health insurer, then penalty provisions can be found in Title IV of HIPAA.

EEOC Has a Voice in HIPAA Implementation

Some additional wellness program regulatory issues are of concern to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) administrators. The ADA employer provisions are administered by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a free-standing federal agency that administers all civil rights legislation affecting employment. The EEOC also administers Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) provisions.

The guiding mission of the EEOC is to end all forms of discrimination in employment. Its policy position emphasizes the elimination of any requirement that employers may apply to employees, regardless of the non-employment-related merits or positive effects involved.

For example, we have evidence that there is a positive effect associated with taking a health risk assessment (HRA),³ yet the EEOC staff have hinted at a position against requiring a health questionnaire to be completed by all employees.⁴ In addition, EEOC staff have ruled that nominal incentives such as T-shirts and water bottles are reasonable, but have hinted that any monetary reward for participation in employee wellness programs makes the incentive involuntary and therefore out of compliance with its regulations.⁵ EEOC staff

have also ruled that employers cannot require biometric testing or screening because it constitutes an “invasive” medical exam and must therefore be voluntary in order to be in compliance.⁶ In addition, employers are prohibited from making “disability-related inquiries” concerning obesity, heart disease, diabetes, epilepsy, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) status.⁷ Full enforcement of this position would prohibit virtually all HRAs used in wellness programming.

To its credit, the EEOC has delayed issuing formal opinions on several of these issues, but the release of periodic tentative policy positions has made these gray areas more problematic for employers. The EEOC views these regulatory issues from the perspective of protecting the individual employee from arbitrary and capricious actions on the part of employers, which is a desirable social objective. However, adhering closely to these prohibitions can also keep employers from offering incentives or services to improve the health of employees and contribute to the stabilization of employee health costs. We have ample evidence that a large proportion of employees and their family members will not voluntarily participate in employee wellness programs.⁸ Effective employee wellness programs are becoming more proactive in offering support, coaching, incentives, and help to individuals, but they are increasingly running the regulatory risk of being out of compliance with ADA regulations.

In summary, the regulatory issues that appear to be of concern to EEOC staff that clearly limit the potential effectiveness of worksite wellness programming efforts are:

- Tacit prohibition of the completion of an annual mandatory HRA.
- Adverse opinion on the use of monetary incentives connected to program participation or wellness activities.
- Explicit prohibition of any form of mandatory medical exams or testing.
- Prohibition of employers making “disability-related inquiries.”
- Prohibition of “punitive triggers” for refusal to participate in disease management programs.
- Prohibition of inquiries concerning prescription drug use.

Many employers have opted to ignore these regulatory issues in the hope that the EEOC will not aggressively prosecute employers for proactive wellness programs. However, the issue is ultimately one of balance. Can the EEOC see its way clear to regulate in a way that eliminates employment discrimination for those with disabilities without limiting employer efforts to improve the health of employees and their family members? If they can not, or choose not to, then perhaps a legislative remedy that would circumscribe their authority in this area is advisable.

Balancing Regulatory Compliance with Wellness Rewards

At WebMD, we believe regulatory strategies affecting worksite wellness programs should prevent instances of abuse or discrimination but should not hinder employers and health plans from being more proactive in reaching employees and their family members with wellness activities. U.S. employers cannot afford to be half-hearted in their provision of wellness services to their populations. Regulatory limitations and requirements will need to support these efforts rather than weaken or restrict them. Federal legislative, regulatory, and tax-related changes could make a major contribution in achieving the important national objectives of improving population health, reducing or stabilizing employer and employee health costs, and contributing to the well-being of our national labor force.

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Exhibit 9-8

Sample Program Launch Letter

[Date]

TO: All City of [] Employees

SUBJECT: New Employee Wellness Program

I am pleased to announce the launching of a wellness program for all city employees. The program will be voluntary and structured to provide a supportive environment for employees to take advantage of opportunities to evaluate health, determine any health risks, and develop tailor-made activities to help meet personal health improvement objectives.

The results from the questionnaire completed in December indicated that most employees are very interested in maintaining good health. There was also a strong indication that employees are interested in reducing health risks through health screening, diet, proper exercise, and attending special awareness workshops. We believe each employee and the city will benefit from a greater awareness of health risks and developing methods of maintaining good health.

Briefly, the program components include:

1. **Employee Wellness Committee.** We have established an Employee Wellness Committee which will provide input and guidance to the program to meet expressed employee needs. Members of the committee were selected from volunteers who desired to have an active role in the development of the program. They are:

[List committee member names and departments.]

You are encouraged to provide suggestions and ask questions of any of the committee members. The more involvement by employees, the better the program will be.

2. **Communications.** Awareness communications designed to inform and advise on health tips, personal progress, and maintenance of good health.
3. **Health Questionnaires and Screenings.** Health questionnaires will be offered annually with health screenings being provided every other year. The results will be entirely confidential, and the city will not be made aware of individual results. Aggregate summary results will be used by the committee in designing an on-going wellness program that best meets the needs of employees.
4. **Health Coaching.** Personalized and confidential health coaching will be provided by health professionals to assist interested employees in meeting your health improvement objectives.
5. **Workshops.** Workshops on such topics as stress reduction, nutrition and weight control, exercise programs, back care, hypertension, and blood pressure screening will be offered~ We will try to schedule workshops at convenient times to allow as many employees as possible to attend.

Let me emphasize that this program is strictly voluntary. You may or may not participate as you so choose, although I hope that each of you will want to take advantage of opportunities to improve your health.

I am looking forward to successful wellness program which will provide each of us the opportunity to become more aware of our health risks and encourage us to improve our overall health and well being.

Mayor []

Exhibit 9-9

Activities & Interventions Resources

AWC Trust Resources

These resources are available to members of the AWC Employee Benefit Trust based on the benefits they purchase from the Trust.

Regence BlueShield/ Asuris Northwest Health Subscribers	Group Health Cooperative Subscribers
Employee Assistance Program APS Healthcare 800-570-9315	Individual cities may purchase EAP services outside of the health plan
On-line wellness programs, medical decision-support tools, discussion boards, health calculators www.MyRegence.com ; www.MyAsuris.com	On-line health profile, medical record, prescriptions, test results, appointments, decision-support tools www.mygrouphealth.com
On-line health risk assessment, health trackers and coaching, medical record, medical encyclopedia www.mywellnessworks.org (available July 2008)	On-line health risk assessment, health trackers and coaching www.mywellnessworks.org (available July 2008)
Tobacco Cessation Program Free & Clear – Quit for Life Program 866-784-8454 www.freeclear.com	Tobacco Cessation Program Free & Clear – Quit for Life Program 800-462-5327 www.freeclear.com/ghc
AWC Wellness Works On-Site Health Screening www.awcnet.org/wellness 800-562-8981	AWC Wellness Works On-Site Health Screening www.awcnet.org/wellness 800-562-8981
24-Hour Nurse Advice Line Regence – 800-267-6729 Asuris – 866-523-0078	24-Hour Nurse Advice Line Western Washington – 800-297-6877 Eastern Washington – 800-826-3629
Regence Advantages/Asuris Advantages Fitness club discount and weight management discount program www.wa.regence.com ; www.asuris.com	

AWC Workers' Comp Retro Members

Worksite stretching/office ergonomics posters, return to work manual, accident prevention program, hearing conservation program, 3-point dismount stickers.

www.awcnet.org/retro
800-562-8981

AWC Drug & Alcohol Consortium Members

Random drug testing for employees with Commercial Drivers Licenses.

www.awcnet.org/d&a
800-562-8981

All AWC Members

Wellness videos, DVDs, program aids and display items
AWC Wellness Library

www.awcnet.org/wellness
800-562-8981

Other Resources

American Dietetic Association
www.eatright.org

American Heart/Stroke Association
www.americanheart.org

American Heart Association – Women & Heart Disease
www.goredforwomen.org

American Institute for Preventive Medicine
www.healthylife.com

American Psychological Association
www.apa.org

AWC Employee Benefit Trust
www.awcnet.org/healthbenefits

Centers for Disease Control Healthier Worksite Initiative
Toolkits, program design, resources, policies.
www.CDC.gov/hwi

Free and Clear
Quit for Life Tobacco Cessation Program
www.freeclear.com

Group Health Cooperative
www.mygrouphealth.com

Get a Flu Shot.com
www.getaflushot.com

Glo Germ – Hand Washington Education
www.glogerm.com

Healthy Weight Network
www.healthyweightnetwork.com

Leadership for Healthy Communities
www.activelivingleadership.org

Map My Fitness
www.mapmyfitness.com

Mind Tools
www.mindtools.com/smpage.html

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute – Women & Heart Disease
www.hearttruth.gov

National Foundation for Credit Counseling
www.nfcc.org

National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health – Stress at Work
www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/stress

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute – Obesity Guidelines
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/ob_home.htm

North Carolina Health Smart Worksite Wellness Toolkit – Eat Smart, Move More, Quit Now & Manage Stress Workbooks
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Resources/wwtoolkit/

President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
www.fitness.gov

Produce for Better Health Foundation
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Professional Assisted Cessation Therapy (PACT)
Employers’ Smoking Cessation Guide: Practical Approaches to a Costly Workplace Problem
www.endsmoking.org

Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program
www.phwa.org

Resiliency in Action
www.resiliency.com

U.S. Department of Agriculture
www.mypyramid.gov

U.S. Department of Labor – Employee Benefits Security Administration
Final HIPAA Rules Non-Discrimination and Wellness Programs – December, 2006
www.dol.gov/ebsa/regs/fedreg/final/2006009557.htm

Washington State Department of Health
www.doh.wa.gov

WebMD
www.webmd.com

Weight Watchers
www.weightwatchers.com

