



benefitNEWS

Wellness in the Workplace Study Results from National Wellness and Specialty Provider, Optum

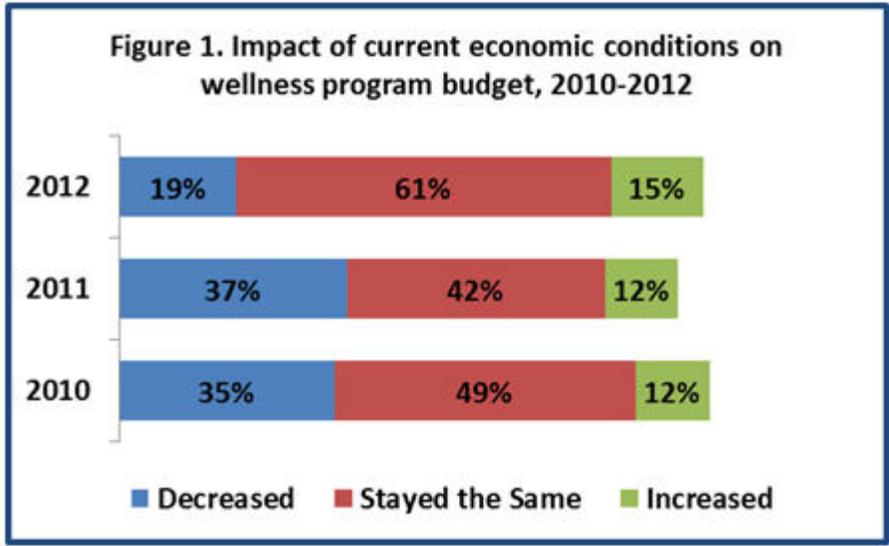
According to Optum's 2013 survey results*, there was a significant jump this past year in the percentage of companies offering wellness programs for two years or less, compared with 2011 (27% vs. 20%). On average, across employers of all sizes, wellness programs have been offered for about four years – with large companies offering them the longest. Nearly four out of 10 companies have offered wellness programs for over five years, compared to one-quarter of medium-sized employers and 21% of small companies.

The results reinforce Conner Strong & Buckelew's strategy to integrate health and wellness solutions into our strategic deliverables for clients. A summary of the survey's key findings are below:

- In the past two years, the number of companies with a written, long-term or annual strategic wellness plan has steadily increased. Interestingly, however, 2012 also saw a spike in firms with no plan at all, from 30% in 2011 to 38% in 2012, perhaps because these firms have just begun offering wellness programs and have not yet developed a strategic plan. Not surprisingly, large- and medium-sized companies are much more likely to have a formal strategic plan than small companies.
- More than half (53%) of companies have a staff member dedicated to wellness – an individual whose sole responsibility is to promote wellness – up from 43% in the previous two years. Large companies are more likely to have a dedicated wellness staff member than smaller companies.
- The top two reasons for offering wellness programs to employees are promoting a healthier, more productive workforce and reducing healthcare costs. Smaller employers, however, are less concerned with lowering medical costs than are medium- and large-sized companies, possibly because they tend to be fully insured.
- As in past years, a large majority of respondents (90%) feels that senior management supports their wellness programs. Most (88%) also agree that the programs are effectively communicated to employees. However, there is also room for improvement. Less than one-fifth (19%) strongly agree that their companies set specific program participation goals, and only 17% strongly agree that they effectively track the return-on-investment (ROI) on their wellness programs. Large companies are more likely than small ones to set specific wellness participation goals or effectively track ROI.
- Despite difficult economic conditions, wellness program budgets have largely stayed the same, if not increased. Small companies have felt the impact of the economy more than

large employers, with about one in four cutting spending last year. Overall however, respondents' outlook is positive, with 40% anticipating that spending will increase over the next three years, up from 30% in 2011 (Figure 1).

- The most common wellness offerings are flu shots, health and wellness communications, and discount programs. Most companies administer their wellness programs through onsite events or online. These two methods have been the most popular delivery channels since 2009. Emerging technologies such as mobile are beginning to take hold – 15% of respondent companies offer programs through this channel.
- Since 2009, the top three incentivized programs have been fitness challenges, biometric screenings, and health assessments. While larger companies are more likely to offer incentives for health assessments, program incentives are generally similar regardless of company size. Incentives for participation in disease management programs have increased in the past few years.
- Making contributions to a health account – such as a health savings account or health reimbursement account – is the most popular type of incentive. Nearly one-third (32%) of respondent companies offered such contributions last year, a significant increase from previous years. On the other hand, cash, discounts to health clubs, and giveaways are diminishing in popularity as incentives. For instance, 30% of companies offered discounts in 2012, down from 37% the year before.
- Overall, almost all wellness programs are considered successful by the respondents. The most successful programs, as determined by participation and engagement, are biometric screenings, flu shots, and onsite clinics.
- On average, just under half (47%) of eligible employees participated in wellness programs in 2012, which is a slight increase since 2010. Participation is higher at small companies (54% on average) than at medium- and large-sized companies (45% on average). The most significant barriers to employee enrollment and engagement in wellness programs at companies of all sizes are a lack of time and lack of motivation.
- In determining overall wellness program success, claims reduction is the biggest factor for large and mid-sized companies, while health risk reduction is most important for small firms. Large employers also place more value than small firms on ROI and reports from their wellness vendors demonstrating value. Mid-sized employers place significantly more value on program participation rates than do companies of other sizes.
- Communication and enrollment strategies are most in need of improvement, according to the respondent companies.



For information on designing a wellness program custom-made for your organization, contact your Conner Strong & Buckelew account representative to ask about our unique services.

**The Optum online surveys were conducted with 511 respondents in companies that offer at least two types of wellness programs.*

connerstrong.com
877-861-3220
news@connerstrong.com
» Change My Preferences

**CONNER
STRONG &
BUCKELEW**

INSURANCE | RISK MANAGEMENT | EMPLOYEE BENEFITS



[Click here to change your email preferences or unsubscribe from all communication.](#)