

12

Management of Health and Wellness Programs for Employees

This chapter discusses the management of health and wellness programs for employees in foodservice, hospitality, and tourism businesses. First, it introduces the case study of the wellness programs and benefits that Rosen Hotels & Resorts offers its employees. Then, it defines health and wellness programs for employees and describes the benefits of these programs to both organizations and employees. Next, it discusses various areas of well-being and gives examples of different employee health and wellness programs. Finally, it describes how to start employee health and wellness programs, how to communicate, measure, and reward program participation, and factors that may affect employee participation in wellness programs.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to do the following:

1. Describe what wellness programs and offerings Rosen Hotels & Resorts provides to its employees.
 2. Define health and wellness programs for employees and provide examples of successful programs.
 3. Describe the benefits of employee health and wellness programs to both organizations and employees.
 4. Name and discuss the various areas of well-being.
 5. Give examples of different employee health and wellness programs.
 6. Discuss how to start employee health and wellness programs.
 7. Describe ways to communicate, measure, and reward health and wellness program participation.
 8. Discuss the factors that affect employee participation in wellness programs.
-

Case study: Rosen Hotels Health and Wellness Program

Harris Rosen, founder of Rosen Hotels and current COO and President, not only believes in a healthy lifestyle but also lives it. Born in 1939, the inspirational icon swims two miles a day and eats a strict and healthy diet. The culture and wellness benefits offered by Rosen Hotels to its employees mirrors this dedication.

The Orlando, FL-based company has an onsite medical center for associates and their families to receive health care like annual exams, basic laboratory work, nutrition program assistance, chiropractic services, and physical therapy. Rosen Medical Center has a complete staff, multilingual services, a state-of-the-art facility, services for students of a local college, occupational medicine, access to specialists, in-house ultrasound and x-ray capabilities, case management, a full gym and fitness center, pharmacy, physical and occupational therapy, and more.

The company even has its self-insured healthcare model, RosenCare[®], which saved the company over \$340 million between the years 1991 and 2018 (latest data available). The program combats rising healthcare costs by offering comprehensive benefits to its employees while incorporating ongoing wellness programs to maintain improved overall health to reduce costs throughout the system. Employees also benefit from low co-pays, affordable specialists, free (or inexpensive) medications, low premiums, same-day services, paid medical visits, transportation, 24-hour information, and more.

Wellness incentive programs allow employees to earn points to redeem for gym equipment and other gifts. Each month has a health theme, like heart health or walking, and employees are given information and inspiration to participate. Community walks and runs to benefit charities and free weekly fitness classes encourage associates to exercise together outside of work for both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons.

Nutrition services at the Rosen Medical Center include a registered dietician on staff to assist with healthy eating choices and weight loss at no cost to the patient. Weight Watchers programs are easily accessible, as well. Healthy food options are stocked throughout their corporate headquarters and their hotel properties, including in vending machines. All menus at company events are approved by the Rosen Medical Center to be both nutritious and tasty and accommodate various dietary restrictions. The Orlando campus even has a healing garden with a small pond and spacious area where fruits and vegetables are grown, including blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, grapes, mangos, avocados, banana, kumquats, key limes, and citrus.

The benefits of this program are visible from the first year, where healthcare costs per employee were immediately reduced from \$2,300 to \$875, and the “cost per covered life” as of 2018 was \$5,500, roughly half of the nation’s \$11,000-\$12,000 average. Rosen’s workers’ compensation costs are much less than the average hotel company, and employee turnover is in the teens, compared to an industry average of 70-80%. RosenCare[®] has won multiple industry and governmental organizations and is often recognized as an excellent example of an employee health and wellness program.

Discussion questions

1. What benefits does RosenCare® offer to its employees?
2. What benefits do Rosen Hotels & Resorts receive from RosenCare®?
3. How could other hotels, including smaller chains, replicate this offering?

Sources: Rosen Hotels & Resorts 2018 & 2020.

Health and wellness programs for employees

Companies of all sizes, in all industries, can offer their employees successful health and wellness programs. In the U.S., approximately half of employers offer wellness initiatives. Larger employers are able to introduce more complex wellness programs to their employees; these programs often include health screening activities and interventions to promote healthy lifestyles. Most employers (72%) view health and wellness programs as a combination of screening activities and interventions. The programs are offered to employees either directly by employers themselves or by third-party vendors. (Mattke et al., 2013).

Employee wellness programs fall under more significant company initiatives like health promotion, which include actions and initiatives to facilitate and encourage healthy eating, exercising and similar actions among employees and managers (Mathis et al., 2019). The goals of these programs can range from quitting smoking, to losing weight, to learning coping strategies to deal with stress. While many health insurance companies offer similar incentives, these are often long-term and more formal; this chapter will focus on how individual organizations can help improve their employees' health (Bean-Mellinger, 2019). Employee health and wellness programs are essential because the workplace is crucial for employees and managers to achieve their health goals and improve their overall health and well-being (Hall et al., 2016). Employees themselves need to be well before they can offer wellness activities to their guests.

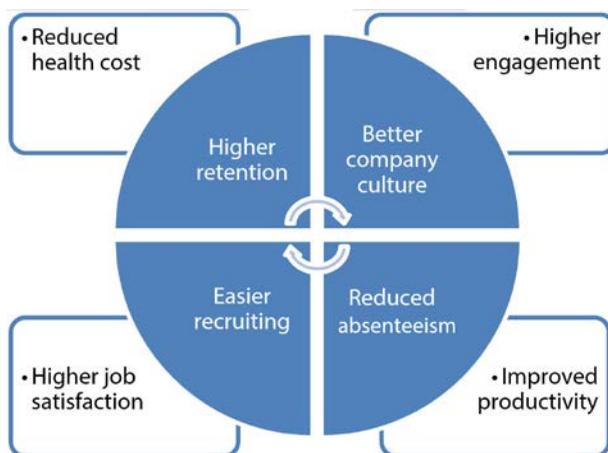


Figure 12.1: Key benefits of employee wellness programs. Adapted from Zojceska (2019)