
Developing University Wellness Programs



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Introduction

Our Objective

Over the years, the cost of health care benefits has consistently risen faster than annual income in North Carolina. What previously attracted individuals to employment with the State of North Carolina was the cost of health insurance benefits. Losing the ability to compete with the private sector on benefit costs will impact the state's ability to attract and retain a workforce. The UNC System must take urgent action to remain an employer of choice amongst so many options. The intent of this project is to convey how cultivating a cultural shift toward wellness in the workplace can help the UNC System achieve the objectives mentioned above.

To accomplish this task, we examined the effectiveness of the most successful wellness programs in public and private industries and provided three recommendations that the UNC System can explore to implement as resources allow. We interviewed UNC System member institutions to develop an understanding of different School's views on the importance of such programs and to obtain information on what successes and failures have occurred in the past to avoid reinventing a broken wheel. We wanted to know what support they were receiving from senior leadership, to include their budget. We also interviewed peer institutions of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to understand current trends, best-practices and to benchmark our recommendations. In total, we interviewed individuals responsible for managing wellness programs at UNC-Chapel Hill, North Carolina Central University, the University of Michigan, the University of Virginia, the NC Office of Human Resources and SAS.

Who it Serves

Wellness programs should service all permanent staff and faculty members within their institution. A full-time employee spends almost 50% of their day at work. If employees are healthier and happier, they will produce more work at a higher quality. Temporary employees should be included in the wellness program when possible. We acknowledge that there are limitations considering that they are not benefited employees.

The Need for Wellness

Value on Investment

“Walk with the dreamers, the believers, the courageous, the cheerful, the planners, the doers, the successful people with their heads in the clouds and their feet on the ground. Let their spirit ignite a fire within you to leave this world better than when you found it...” — Wilferd Peterson

Policymakers talk consistently about improving the wellness at workplace but if our focus is on ROI (Return on Investment) alone than we might not get the results we are looking for. Organizations are now moving toward VOI (Value on Investment), especially in the employee wellness space. There are many different ways to evaluate employee wellness programs, but it can be a bit difficult to compare the value we get out of the program with the resources we put into it. Employers who offer workplace wellness programs not only have healthier, happier employees, they reap fiscal benefits, too.

It's All About the People

Having a wellness culture in our workplace can play a huge role in the well-being of our employees and the quality of the work they do. If we really want to help our employees live healthier lifestyles, we will need to create an environment that is conducive, supportive and evolving. The programs and the environment should be flexible to adapt to the needs of all generations (baby boomers to post-millennials). A program that works for baby boomers might not engage the millennials and vice versa. While there isn't one single way to develop this healthy culture, there are some strategies and recommendations that we have researched and could help diffuse innovation into wellness programs.

Leaders of our institutions will have to go beyond what their progressive peers have done. While we have gathered data from two successful public universities that have full-time wellness coordinators, UVA and UM, our leaders should explore meeting leaders from an organization that is right next door, SAS, recognized globally for their workplace culture. SAS, although private, has a wellness culture that is unparalleled and way ahead of other organizations. They are the employer of choice. "SAS' turnover rate remains below 5 percent versus an industry norm of more than 16 percent" ^[1].

The press releases of SAS clearly show them as a leader in the "Most Caring Companies" category:

1. SAS ranks No. 4 on 2015 Fortune list of Best Companies to Work For in the US ^[1]
2. SAS again named among Best Workplaces for Women ^[2]
3. Fortune names SAS No. 2 best place to work for millennials ^[3]
4. People magazine has named SAS in the top 5 of its first annual "50 Companies That Care" list ^[4]
5. SAS celebrates 20th year as one of Fortune's best US workplaces ^[5]

Transform Strategies

For comprehensive wellness programs to succeed, companies must adopt strategies to get a majority of their workers engaged in creating the desired outcome. It all comes down to behavior change. According to the Fitbit Health Solutions' White Paper, "The truth about motivation and what makes healthy habits stick" ^[6], motivation is key to helping initiate and maintain behavior change. The paper provides the scoop on motivation, lists key components of motivation, tools for motivational interviewing, and right approach to motivational messaging.

WellSteps blogpost ^[7] provides seven reasons to have a wellness program (Summary of the blogpost provided below).

The 7 Best Reasons to Have a Wellness Program: Benefits of Wellness ^[7]

1. Wellness Programs Improve Employee Health Behaviors
2. Wellness Programs Reduce Elevated Health Risks
3. Wellness Programs Reduce Health Care Costs
4. Wellness Programs Improve Productivity
5. Wellness Programs Can Decrease Absenteeism
6. Wellness Programs Can Help Improve Employee Recruitment and Retention
7. Wellness Programs Build and Help Sustain High Employee Morale

Workplace Wellness Programs Study ^[8]

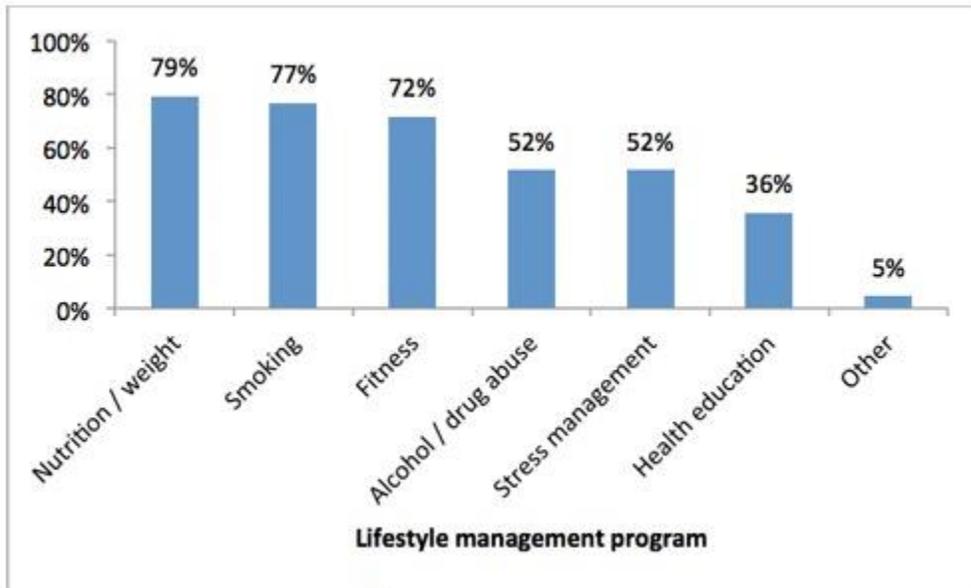
RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision making through research and analysis. They conducted Workplace Wellness Programs Study Research, which was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“The report investigates the characteristics of workplace wellness programs, their prevalence, their impact on employee health and medical cost, facilitators of their success, and the role of incentives in such programs. The authors employ four data collection and analysis streams: a review of the scientific and trade literature, a national survey of employers, a longitudinal analysis of medical claims and wellness program data from a sample of employers, and five case studies of existing wellness programs in a diverse set of employers to gauge the effectiveness of wellness programs and employees' and employers' experiences.” ^[8]

From the RAND report, we selected four subjects, and the charts below provide insight into those focused subjects ^[9]:

- **Figure 1** - Among Employers Offering a Lifestyle Management Program, Percentage Offering Specific Interventions
- **Figure 2** - Among Employers Offering a Disease Management Program, Percentage Offering Programs for Specific Chronic Conditions
- **Figure 3** - Average Participation Rates of Employees Identified for Inclusion in Select Wellness Program Components
- **Figure 4** - Percentage of Employers with Wellness Programs Using Participation and Results-Based Incentives for Selected Health Behaviors

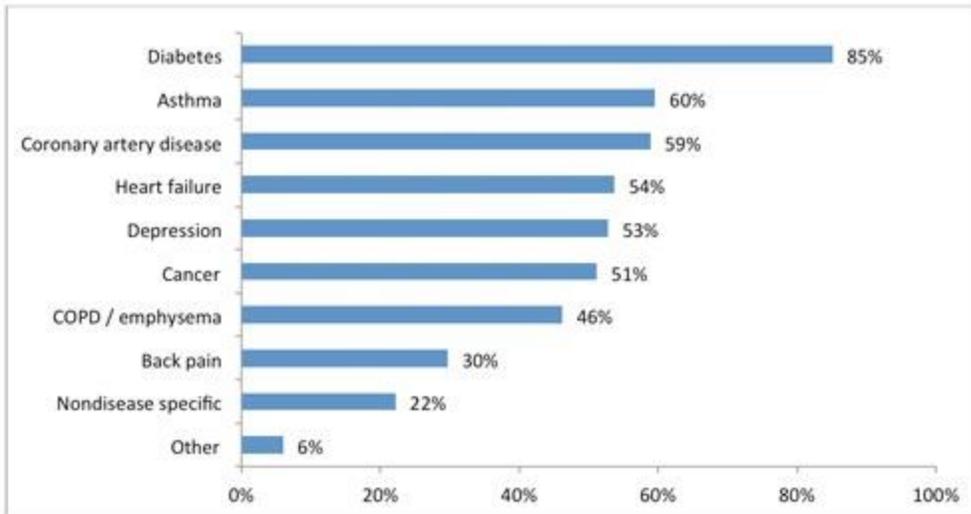
Figure 1



Among Employers Offering a Lifestyle Management Program, Percentage Offering Specific Interventions

NOTES: The graph represents information from employers with at least 50 employees that offer any lifestyle management intervention as a component of a wellness program. 51 percent of employers offer a wellness program, and 77 percent of those offer a lifestyle management intervention.

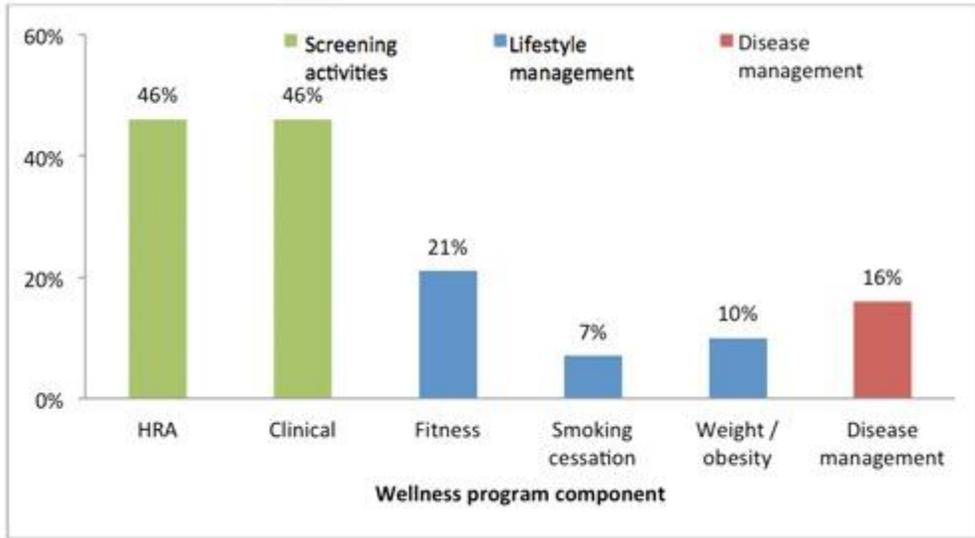
Figure 2



Among Employers Offering a Disease Management Program, Percentage Offering Programs for Specific Chronic Conditions

NOTES: The graph represents information from employers with at least 50 employees that offer any disease management intervention as a component of a wellness program. 51 percent of employers offer a wellness program, and 56 percent of those offer a disease management intervention. COPD = chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

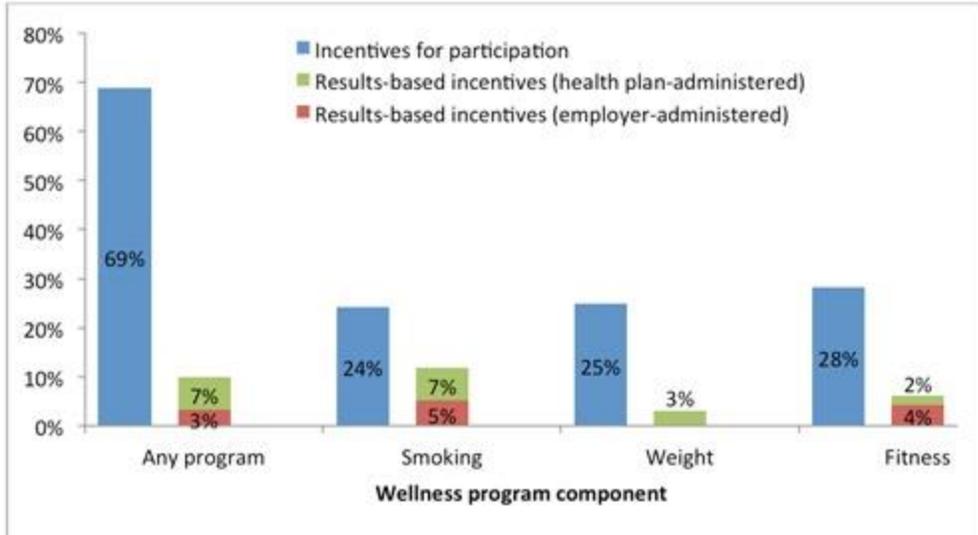
Figure 3



Average Participation Rates of Employees Identified for Inclusion in Select Wellness Program Components

NOTES: The graph represents information from employers with at least 50 employees that offer the specific component as part of a wellness program

Figure 4



Percentage of Employers with Wellness Programs Using Participation and Results-Based Incentives for Selected Health Behaviors

NOTES: The graph represents information from employers with at least 50 employees with wellness programs or which offer lifestyle management as a component of a wellness program. 51 percent of employers offer a wellness program, and 77 percent of those have lifestyle management. Among employers with a lifestyle management intervention, 77 percent offer programs that target smoking, 79 percent target weight management, and 72 percent offer fitness programs.

Wellness at work: The promise and pitfalls ^[10]

McKinsey & Company in their quarterly commentary (October 2017), talks about the promise and pitfalls about wellness at work and one of the contributors, Bob Chapman, chairman and CEO, Barry-Wehmiller, and Co-author of “Everybody Matters,” gets emotional when talking about this subject.

Here are a few notable mentions from the commentary that Bob Chapman uses to emphasize the importance of Wellness at work:

“The person you report to at work can be more important to your health than your family doctor. We want to send people home safe, healthy, and fulfilled—all three dimensions.”

Beyond Sleep and Exercise

“The biggest cause of chronic illness is stress, and the biggest cause of stress is work. Stress is a machinist who walks in every day, gets ten things right and never hears a word, and gets one thing wrong and has his ass chewed out. Then he goes home and treats his family like he has been treated. Organizational stress is caused by people feeling that they’re not appreciated. If we simply cared about the people whose lives we are privileged to lead, and send them home each night feeling valued, we could have much lower health costs. When 88 percent of people do not feel they’re part of an organization that cares about them, we are manufacturing the healthcare crisis. And then we go to the byproduct, which is pills and medications and hospital visits.”

Is there a business case for wellness?

“A senior executive at a big car company asked me what kind of return we got for this investment in culture. I asked, “Are you kidding me? Did you just ask me what kind of financial return I get for caring?” And he said, “At my company, we are extremely numeric.” And I said, “That’s pitiful.” Then he told me that only 30 percent of the people would recommend a job there to a friend or family member. No kidding.”

Organizational health: A fast track to performance improvement ^[11]

An article by Chris Gagnon, Elizabeth John, and Rob Theunissen in McKinsey & Company’s quarterly publication (September 2017) ^[11], provides insight into the growing need for wellness at workplace. Organizations that are investing in workplace wellness programs are demonstrating tangible performance gains in as little as 6–12 months.

Excerpts from the published insights (shown below) indicate a strong correlation between employee wellness and financial performance of the organization. Our recommendations provide pathways for leaders and countless research indicates that wellness is a top-to-bottom strategic initiative. The forward thinking of top management and their ability to align around a common vision for employee health will be a good-to-great initiative.

Excerpts from the published article ^[11] follows:

Health and the Bottom Line

We think of organizational health as more than just culture or employee engagement. It's the organization's ability to align around a common vision, execute against that vision effectively, and renew itself through innovation and creative thinking. Put another way, health is how the ship is run, no matter who is at the helm and what waves rock the vessel.

The case for health

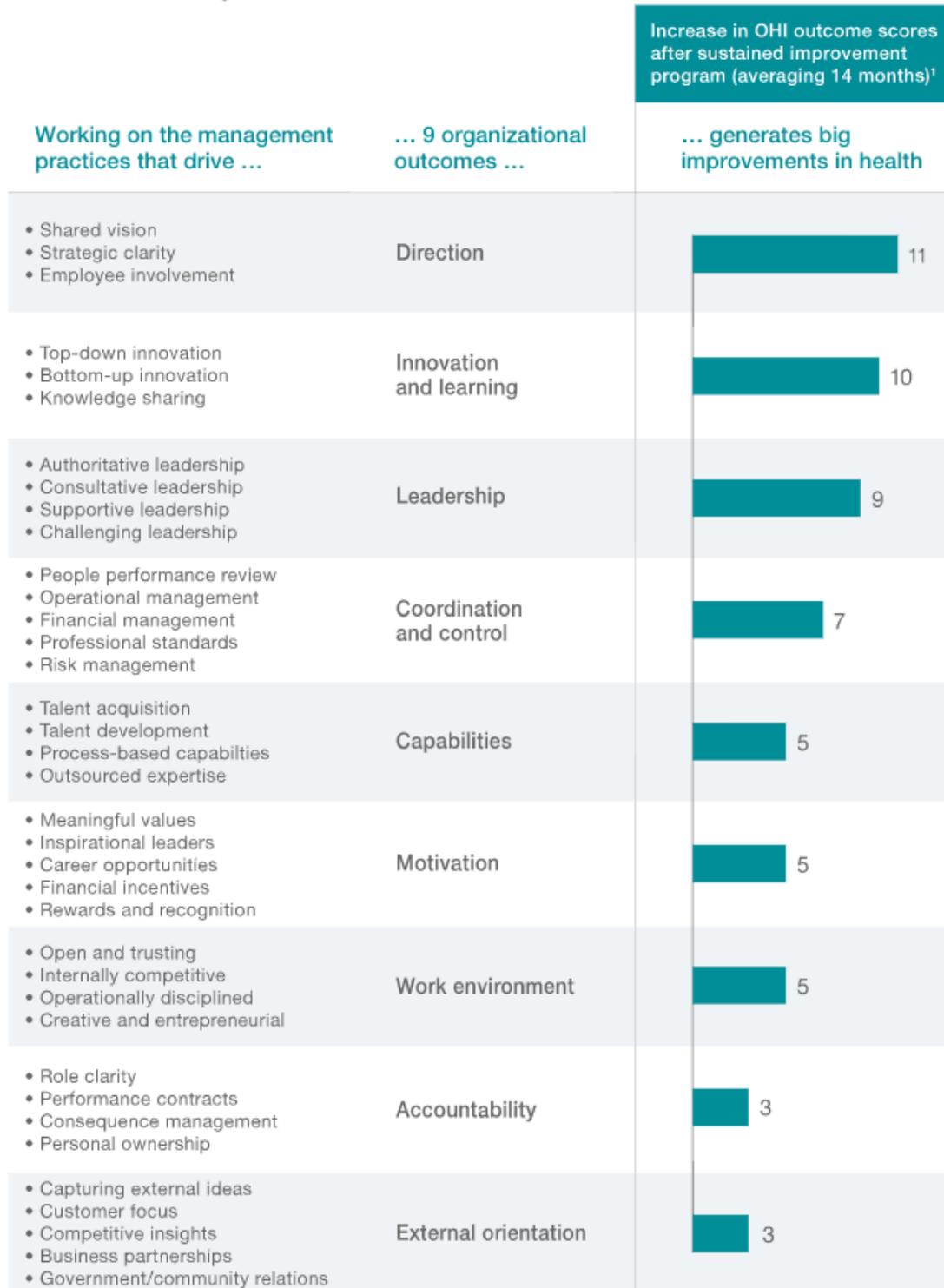
Over the past ten years, we've monitored the health of more than 1,500 companies across 100 countries. We do this by aggregating the views of their employees and managers (more than four million to date) on management practices that drive nine key organizational dimensions – or "outcomes," as we call them. We assign scores to each practice and outcome, allowing a company to see how it compares to others in the database.

We've long seen a strong, static correlation between health and financial performance. But our latest research is more dynamic: it highlights the potential for the vast majority of companies to improve their health and how this can correspond with enhanced performance. Our findings include the following:

- **Almost all companies perform better if they improve their health.** Around 80 percent of companies that took concrete actions on health saw an improvement, with a median six-point increase in their overall health (**Exhibit 1**). The majority of these companies moved up an entire quartile against all other companies in our database. Over the same period that the companies in our sample were making changes to their health, their earnings¹ and total returns to shareholders (TRS) were also increasing disproportionately – by 18 percent and 10 percent, respectively (against an average 7 percent increase in earnings and an average 9 percent increase in TRS for those companies in the S&P 500).
- **The unfit are the most likely to make the biggest health advances.** After working on their health, companies in the bottom quartile saw a 9-point health improvement, with notably strong improvements in the company direction (+17 points) and innovation and learning (+14 points) outcomes. This group of "health workers" made progress across every outcome.
- **Those at the top achieve the biggest financial rewards.** Companies whose health-improvement efforts took them from the second quartile of the OHI to the top quartile recorded the biggest financial-performance boost, a clear sign that working on health is an important factor in going from "good" to "great."

Exhibit 1

Companies that take concrete actions to improve their health can deliver impressive results.



¹OHI = Organizational Health Index; n = 64 companies with 252,339 individual respondents; start and end dates differ for each company.

ROI vs. VOI and the Business Value of a Healthier Working Population ^[12]

The Integrated Benefits Institute ^[13] shows that health and productivity can be viewed in these proportions:

- 20% wage replacement
- 40% medical and pharmacy costs
- 40% lost productivity

All told, the poor health of employees costs employers \$576 billion a year.

There are many ways for employers to mitigate increasing health care costs. By integrating health management practices, such as value-based benefit design, health and safety policies, and population-specific programs to promote prevention and risk avoidance, organizations can proactively address the health and productivity of their workforce.

Successful Wellness Programs

The University of Virginia

The University of Virginia (UVA) has a comprehensive employee wellness program called Hoo's Well. In its entirety, the wellness program covers physical wellness, nutrition, financial wellness, mental and emotional wellness, and social wellness. Hoo's Well is run by 3 full-time employees and one part-time employee ^[14]. This includes a Wellness Program Director, Wellness Program Coordinator, a Wellness Program Specialist and a part-time graduate assistant to support a population of 21,000 employees. The program is designed to work in conjunction with the UVA Health Plan for eligible employees and their spouses.

UVA has a fall campaign where eligible employees can earn up to \$500 in rewards by completing three steps ^[15].

1. Complete a Biometric Screening or Physician Screening Form – \$200
2. Complete an Online Health Assessment – \$100
3. Complete the Fitness Challenge – \$200

To complete the fitness challenge, an employee or spouse must complete 52 workouts (30+ minutes of exercise or 7,000 steps) in 13 weeks. Participants can sync their Fitbit to UVA's third-party health insurance portal to record their activity. Those who prefer more traditional methods can manually log their workouts and receive credit. In the spring, employees can earn an additional \$200 for a total of \$700 in rewards.

Hoo's Well has allowed the University of Virginia to be recognized as an American Heart Association Platinum Fit-Friendly Worksite ^[16]. This is the highest of two-levels that an organization can qualify for.

The University of Michigan

The University of Michigan employee wellness program began in 1987 as MFIT ^[17]. It was designed to only service health care system employees. Over the years, the program evolved into what it is known today as M-Healthy. There are 5 full-time wellness coordinators to support 42,000 employees across four campuses ^[18]. The most successful wellness program at UM is their Active U program. Active U is a program similar to the spring and fall fitness challenge at UVA. Participants set weekly physical activity goals and must complete and record their physical activity at least 8 out of 12 weeks. In addition, they must complete the program end survey. By participating in Active U, an employee is eligible to earn up to \$100 in rewards and the renowned Active U t-shirt.

SAS

In visiting the SAS Headquarters in Cary, NC, we found a wellness center purposefully created separately from the human resources department. The intent was to create an atmosphere where employees feel they are receiving services and not conducting a business transaction. When you walk in the door there is a library of 2,500 books on nutrition, parenting, stress management and more. To the right of the library there is a caring closet. The caring closet has medical equipment (e.g. wheel chairs, walkers, shower chairs) that employees can borrow for a short-term use at no cost.

With over 14,000 employees worldwide, SAS has a dedicated team of 6 full-time wellness professionals that offer services and one-on-one consultations with their employees ^[19]. Even with a yearly revenue of \$3.2 billion, SAS does not dedicate a significant amount of funds to the wellness program. Many of the services they provide are free or low-cost. For example, they conduct an Eldercare fair each year where community organizations volunteer their time to help staff become aware of resources available to assist them with aging parents or loved ones. SAS only spends about \$300 to provide lunch to the volunteers ^[20]. SAS estimates that the services their wellness coordinators provide saves them \$4 million annually ^[21]. SAS believes that “the investments they make in employee health, well-being and work life-balance can be seen in a dedicated workforce, committed to moving up the ranks rather than out the door ^[22].”

The institutions we interviewed measured their program success by employee participation, sustained behavior after program completion, and health care savings. The University of Michigan found that employees who complete one fitness challenge, start the next fitness challenge at a higher level of physical activity. UVA maintains a 48% participation rate in its fitness challenges ^[23].

Wellness Trends

Throughout our research we found three trends in wellness programs: strong focus on physical activity, rewards and incentives, and the utilization of wellness champions. In UVA's 2016 WAHOO Fitness Challenge Summary it was stated that “increasing participation in wellness programs that promote healthy lifestyle change is important for reducing the prevalence of chronic disease conditions in

employees. By offering programs that encourage, promote, and reward an active lifestyle, the Hoo's Well program helps improve employee health and potentially reduce employee healthcare costs."

The second trend in wellness programs is the use of rewards and incentives to encourage participation. Not all employees are motivated by financial gains; the challenge alone is motivation enough for some. Wellness programs must offer a variety of incentives to reach the masses, even if it is as simple as a t-shirt. Through survey, UVA found that employees that participated in their wellness fitness challenge were motivated by:

- Financial Reward
- Increased Motivation/Accountability
- Achieving/Exceeding Goal
- Awareness of Activity

Some researchers disagree on the effectiveness of incentives. The use of incentives to promote employee engagement, while increasingly popular, remains poorly understood, and it is not clear how the type (e.g., cash or noncash), direction (reward versus penalty), and strength of incentives are related to employee engagement and outcomes ^[24]." Each institution should assess its employee's needs and which incentives will both motivate them and have a sustaining impact.

The third trend involves the use of wellness champions. Wellness champions are individuals who volunteer to be advocates for wellness in their work unit. On a periodic basis, they report back to the university wellness program manager. At UVA, there are 150 wellness champions that serve as the first line of communication for Hoo's Well program initiatives. They formally meet as a unit twice a year, but some work on focus groups throughout the year.

What We Have Now

The UNC System must drive a cultural shift of workplace wellness in order to maintain healthy, happy and productive employees. Employees are some of a University's greatest assets – without strong employees, everyday functions aren't supported and innovation struggles to thrive. What we have in place now for the UNC System is not enough to sustain this necessary culture of wellness.

Currently, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro are the only UNC System campuses to have full-time permanent wellness positions. UNC-Chapel Hill has one and a half full-time positions, NC State has one full-time position and UNC Greensboro has one full-time position devoted to this work. The full-time permanent position at UNC-Chapel Hill was just recently put in place and was filled within the past several weeks. These positions do not currently exist at any of the other UNC System campuses.

Other campuses may have employees in Campus Recreation, Sport Science, Exercise Medicine, or similar departments, take on wellness coordinator responsibilities in lieu of a full-time wellness coordinator position. But without support at the highest levels, it is difficult for their great efforts and progress to reach beyond their own department.

North Carolina Central University is a prime example of where support from senior University leadership is needed to make a University-wide impact. In speaking with NCCU's business officer in Campus Recreation and Fitness, and NCCU's former coordinator of fitness and wellness in Campus Recreation and Fitness, we learned that they have spearheaded multiple programs and engagement opportunities for their students, faculty and staff that center around wellness and self-care. Their individual wellness programs and events have been very successful within Campus Recreation, some lasting ten or more years. However, with no senior leadership at NCCU supporting campus-wide wellness roles, it has been a challenge for wellness to become a University-wide priority ^[25].

Our Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Support from the Top

Our first recommendation is to have support for wellness roles and initiatives from senior University leadership. It will be important to have this top-level support and advocacy at each individual campus in order to maintain a wellness focus at each location. We live in a diverse state, with diverse needs, and a local wellness advocate will be important in understanding the individual culture and climate for wellness.

In addition to senior University leadership, including the chancellors at each UNC System campus and senior management in each Office of Human Resources, there will need to be support from state legislators, the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors. The state budget is influenced by the state legislators; their understanding of the need and their support for wellness coordinators will be integral in order to fund the necessary positions. Individual wellness programs are supported by the campuses, either through state or private funds.

With this in place, a UNC System-wide culture shift toward wellness can happen. As seen with SAS, when the head of a company takes wellness on as an initiative and makes it a priority, the influence filters down and a real difference is made.

Recommendation 2: Dedicated Wellness Professionals

Our second recommendation is to have dedicated wellness professionals at each campus to carry through the wellness initiatives. The goal is to have someone on each UNC System campus, as well as in the UNC System Office, with a campus-wide reach promoting a culture of wellness.

The State of North Carolina recognizes the need for wellness and has created a state mandate for all state agencies to have wellness coordinators. However, this mandate was not given a budget and there currently is not funding to fill all of these positions.

In light of budget restraints, we are proposing three scalable options that UNC System campuses can implement as their own budgets allow. Even on a smaller scale, the benefits of a culture shift toward wellness will be seen and felt.

- ***Full-Time Permanent Employee***

Ideally, a full-time permanent employee will be hired to manage the responsibilities of a wellness coordinator. This will bring stability and ongoing leadership to the role. It will create a permanent presence of wellness initiatives and advocacy. As the employee builds and cultivates strong relationships across the institution, the spread of knowledge, support and culture of wellness will strengthen.

As seen with the University of Michigan and the University of Virginia, as well as with SAS, it may take more than one employee to lead these efforts. Given the size of some of the UNC System campuses, a higher number of wellness coordinators may be needed at some locations. The number of these positions can increase over the years if the resources allow, but even starting with one established position will be a great step toward accomplishing a culture shift toward wellness.

An alternative solution to having a full-time permanent employee at each campus is to utilize a shared services model. In this scenario, the UNC System Office would house several full-time permanent wellness coordinators and these employees would act as regional wellness coordinators. Each would be assigned multiple UNC System campuses as their region and they would coordinate wellness programs and advocacy at the locations within their region. These positions would need to be funded by the UNC System or the North Carolina State Health Plan.

- ***Chancellor's Fellows Program***

The Chancellor's Fellows Program is unique to UNC-Chapel Hill within the state of North Carolina. Chancellor Carol L. Folt established the program at UNC-Chapel Hill in 2014. Before coming to UNC-Chapel Hill to become the University's 11th chancellor, she took charge of a similar program at Dartmouth College, where she served as the interim president of the College and as a faculty member, among other leadership roles.

The Chancellor's Fellows Program offers recent graduates of UNC-Chapel Hill exposure to higher education and its unique opportunities and inner workings. Only students in their senior undergraduate year are eligible to apply, and only three are usually awarded the Fellowship. The selected candidates are typically high achievers with talent, drive and passion to make a difference.

The Chancellor's Fellows Program is set up so that each Fellow works on a variety of important University initiatives. Schools and units submit proposals and nine are hand-selected by leadership in the Chancellor's Office. Each Fellow is assigned an area of focus for a 4-month time frame. In the 2016-2017 Fellowship year, one area was allowed a year-long focus. The program has been modified a bit each year in order to improve the structure and to become more successful ^[26].

If wellness could be an on-going area of focus for a Chancellor's Fellow for an entire year, year after year, this would be a great opportunity to establish a strong culture of wellness at the University. With direct support from the Chancellor, and the opportunity to connect and work with an array of high-profile positions within the University, there is the potential for great impact and progress.

Although the Chancellor’s Fellows Program is currently only implemented at UNC-Chapel Hill, it is a great model for other institutions to adopt, if their structures and resources allow.

- **Student Internship**

Internships are a great way for students to gain experience in their area of study and to explore other interests in order to narrow down their focus. There are many benefits to participating in a student internship, both for the student and for the University.

If resources at a UNC System campus do not allow for a paid wellness position, then an unpaid student internship is a nice option. It will allow the institution to still have a wellness champion on campus while giving the student an opportunity to engage in wellness initiatives and to make an impact. If a campus is able to support multiple student internships, that would help wellness efforts to amplify. However, as with the full-time permanent position, even having one position to begin will be a great step toward accomplishing a culture shift toward wellness.

Recommendation 3: Getting the Word Out

A successful wellness program requires multiple avenues of communication. Communicating a program must begin with a strong foundation that is fully supported by top/senior management. The wellness program must be dynamic enough to be able to sustain the interest of the participants or employees over a period of time. The wellness coordinator and/or champion must establish multiple avenues to spread the word on all of the available programs.

Website

The basic tool that should be used is a dedicated website to direct employees to information based on the topic they are interested in. A website is an inexpensive and dynamic tool to attract employees who are tech savvy. Below is a representative list of topics that can be researched from the North Carolina Office of Human Resources website ^[27] for information on ways to improve employee wellness:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Financial
- Environmental
- Emotional/Mental
- Spiritual
- Occupational
- Social

Email

With prior approval of Information Technologies and Human Resources supervision, sending broadcast emails to everyone in the organization is a powerful way to advertise the programs. These emails need to contain relevant information about upcoming activities. Emails can be tracked and will ensure that the messages are getting out. Embedded content can include contests (such as FitBit giveaway drawings), healthy recipes (possibly links to Pinterest), Twitter surveys about possible upcoming activities and links that can be tracked (such as Twitter impressions and engagements).

Flyers

The wellness coordinator and/or champion will need to develop flyers that describe the programs well enough to pique interest. These flyers can be emailed to all employees. Area supervisors can print and post the flyers where employees gather (e.g. break rooms, rest room doors, hallway bulletin boards) so that employees who do not have ready access to email will be able to see what's happening and what resources are available to them. These posters need to be dated in order to ensure they are removed when the content is no longer valid.

Social Media

Social media is a vital tool used to get information out about wellness initiatives available to employees. The current social media sites that are being used at UNC-Chapel Hill are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Flickr. These tools can be used by the employees (and their family members) to stay current on services and activities.

Tracking Results

Once the employee is interested in participating in the wellness program, the challenge then becomes sustaining the employee's interest. The wellness coordinator and/or champion must be able to encourage employees to participate. Ultimately, wellness should be an agenda item to be discussed in department meetings to promote participation. Review of employee involvement in the wellness programs must be done on a continuous basis in order to ensure an impact is being made. Surveys at the beginning, middle and end of wellness programs must be done to obtain data on personnel. Changes may need to occur to ensure maximum participation by all employees. Wellness programs are like a startup company; initial research is done to start up the company, but to survive the company must offer a product that consumers want to use.

Program Planning

Wellness programs also need to have coaches. These coaches can be such people as a Human Resources facilitator who can direct the employees to the services offered through the wellness program. It does not take an athlete or professional trainer to be a coach. The best coaches are personnel that the employees know and who they are comfortable with. It does not hurt to use personnel who have gone through the wellness activities themselves and have benefitted as the coaches/trainers.

The wellness coordinator and/or champion will be challenged to develop programs that are economically feasible for the universities. The wellness coordinator and/or champion will also need to develop a business plan. There is a significant amount of information on wellness programs developed

for university and corporate environments. See the Further Reading and Resources section at the end of this report for website addresses and books that can be used as a reference for developing a wellness program.

Estimated Costs

As previously mentioned, the estimated costs of a comprehensive wellness program include the salary of the wellness coordinator and investment in the wellness program. Based on the State of North Carolina pay bands, we estimate the wellness coordinator salary will cost \$57,000–\$63,000 annually. This figure is 90%–99% of the market rate for the University Program Manager – Journey classification.

The Wellness Council of America recommends investing at least \$100–\$150 per employee to receive a positive ROI ^[28]. Currently, the University of Michigan charges each department \$9 per month per benefited employee – that is \$108 per employee. Dr. Dee Edington of the University of Michigan once said, “medical care is expensive, wellness care is free ^[29].” Research has shown that moderate investments in wellness are beneficial for employers. However, if an organization is anticipating investing less than \$100 per employee, a ROI is not likely.

The entire cost of the wellness program does not fall to the employer. Employees can pay a percentage of the expenses by paying a portion of the program fees. For example, an employee could pay 100% of the cost for participating in a Weight Watchers program and receive 50% back after attending a set number of sessions.

Implementation and Timeline

Who Needs to Be Involved to Make It Work?

Garnering support from senior leadership is paramount. Financial resources are needed for both the salary of the wellness coordinator and budget for the program. Without leadership’s support, obtaining the required resources will be difficult at best. In addition to financial needs, leadership support is needed to promote the program itself. Having key University figures behind a wellness challenge or activity will attract participation from employees at all levels.

Who is Responsible for Implementation?

Although we are recommending a wellness coordinator at each UNC System campus and at the UNC System Office, implementation is not a one-person job. The wellness coordinator will ultimately be held responsible for the execution of this program, but a committee will be needed to assist in reaching the wellness program’s goals.

Timeline for Implementation

The UNC System campuses work to create, manage and implement positions based on the allotment of finances that are provided via state funding, fundraising and grants. It is important that campuses identify sustainable funding for the wellness coordinator position. Once sustainable funding is implemented, the campus will submit a job description for approval. If the job description is approved, the position is then posted, applicants are interviewed and hiring takes place. The process, which includes identifying funding and then hiring a wellness coordinator, can take 6–12 months depending on the speed of the initial approval process.

Sample Wellness Coordinator Position Description

The primary purpose of this position is to create, implement and evaluate wellness programs for all employees campus-wide.

Duties and Responsibilities

Program Development – Research best practices/current trends to create a comprehensive wellness program that meets the varying needs of a diverse workforce. Collaborate with campus partners to address any possible redundancy and establish a cohesive wellness strategy and brand. Develop strategic partnerships to promote community engagement.

Communications and Marketing Plan – Establish a marketing plan that engages all employees and utilizes relevant technology.

Program Delivery – Administer all program aspects to include partnerships, contracts and budget oversight.

Required Competencies

The ability to independently gather data, analyze results and provide program activities in support of the overall objective.

The ability to prioritize competing priorities and manage multiple concurrent projects.

Excellent written and verbal communication required to draft communications (e.g. flyers, website updates, email blasts, social media blurbs)

Excellent interpersonal skills in order to establish and maintain relationships with clients and external vendors. The ability to work with campus executives and key decision makers is required.

Summary and Conclusion

After examining the effectiveness of the most successful wellness programs in public and private industries, we provided three recommendations that the UNC System can explore to implement as resources allow. Less than 1/3 of the UNC System campuses have a wellness coordinator position. The topic of wellness has become increasingly important as workplace environments have become more stressful and health care costs have risen. The costs of health care in the state of North Carolina has risen faster than the annual income. Families and individuals are seeking opportunities to find a work-life balance, and companies are looking to maintain employee retention. This overlap in needs by the employee and employer generates the need for a wellness coordinator.

Knowing that wellness in the workplace can have a direct effect on employee retention, it is imperative that the UNC System hires wellness coordinator positions to create and implement a new workplace culture. Our scalable solutions can be implemented on all UNC System campuses, including the UNC System Office, and can be made available to all employees.

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- 3** Fortune names SAS No. 2 best place to work for millennials - https://www.sas.com/en_in/news/press-releases/2017/june/fortune-workplace-millennials.html
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Further Reading and Resources

- **Chancellor's Fellows Program**
<http://chancellor.unc.edu/about-the-office/chancellors-fellows-program/>
- **Worksite Wellness Workbook – A step by step guide and resources for developing a worksite wellness program for your organization**
<https://www.hap.org/~media/files/hap/for-employer/workbook-2013.pdf>
- **121 Employee Wellness Program Ideas For Your Office (+10 Bonus Ideas)**
<http://go.snacknation.com/P000V04NmMODai070k2A200>
- **Wellness Promotion Competency Model**
 - ❖ <http://www.nationalwellness.org/news/357205/Ground-breaking-New-Competency-Model-for-Wellness-Promotion-Released.htm>
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