Historical Summary of American Heart Association Published Positions on Worksite Wellness/Employee Health Management


This was the American Heart Association’s original policy statement on worksite wellness, reaffirming our support for comprehensive programs as an important means of reaching the more than 130 million Americans employed in the U.S. work force and improving the cardiovascular health of this adult population. In this paper we outlined several important components of programs that are important for improving cardiovascular health and well-being.


This op-ed clarified the position of our three organizations on outcomes-based incentives as a response to the editor’s earlier article. We reiterated our concerns that these types of incentives could be used to shift costs to employees with chronic disease and reduce access to affordable, quality health care if important consumer protections were not in place.


After a contentious debate during passage of the Affordable Care Act, we realized the importance of coming together with diverse stakeholders to find middle ground where there was consensus on reasonably designed worksite wellness programs and the use of incentives in outcomes-based programs. This collaborative process culminated in the 2012 guidance paper that was well-received by employers and helped inform the regulatory agencies in the development the final wellness rule.

Large employers, federal and state governments, and hospital systems are significant purchasers and providers of food and beverages. This paper described the role of the food-and-beverage environment and procurement policy standards in creating healthier worksite environments.


As the healthcare system in the United States undergoes a paradigm shift that results in a greater focus on the early identification and management of risk factors, this paper reviewed the role of health screenings in the workplace as a promising strategy for early detection of risk factors and managing chronic disease. The paper outlined considerations for screenings including timing, frequency, privacy protection, and delivery models.


This paper outlined recommendations for employers to deal with these new tobacco products that have entered the marketplace including screening, cessation services, education and awareness, and including them in comprehensive worksite tobacco policy.


This most recent paper outlined the American Heart Association’s commitment to promote science-based best practices for comprehensive workplace wellness programs and establish benchmarks for a national workplace wellness recognition program to assist employers in applying the best systems and strategies for optimal programming.
Regulatory Comments

WORKSITE WELLNESS

- May 25, 2011: Wellness Program Study: Assessing the Impact of Workplace Health & Wellness Programs
  - Comments submitted to Department of Health and Human Services

- January 25, 2013: Proposed Rule on Incentives for Nondiscriminatory Wellness Programs in Group Health Plans
  - Comments submitted to Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Treasury

- September 15, 2014: Draft Current Intelligence Bulletin: Promoting Health and Preventing Disease and Injury Through Workplace Tobacco Policies
  - Comments submitted to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

GINA

- November 12, 2009: Interim Final Rules Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Genetic Information in Health Insurance (Implementation of sections 101 through 103 of Title I of GINA)
  - Joint comments organized by AHA, included 62 different organizations

- November 20, 2009: Interim Final Rules Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Genetic Information in Health Insurance (Implementation of sections 101 through 103 of Title I of GINA)
  - Comments submitted to Employee Benefits Security Administration, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and Department of Treasury

  - Comments submitted to Department of Health and Human Services