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Employer Perspective: Value of Integrated Models and Future Needs

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Today's Realities

- Soaring health care costs are driving intense interest in programs to address all causes of employee ill health
- Competitive pressures lead companies to look for ways to maintain or increase worker productivity

Today's Realities

- An increasingly knowledge-based workforce makes replacement of workers difficult and costly
- Commitment to corporate social responsibility and sustainability means taking a closer look at workforce well-being

What Companies Tell Us


- The relative contribution of work-related and non work-related factors to the development of worker illness is often hard to discern — especially in the context of psychosocial issues
- Depression and other mental health disorders have a significant impact of productivity
- There is a growing recognition that organizational factors can have a significant impact-positive or negative

Companies Also Tell Us

- Integrated approaches to on and off the job causes of injury and illness hold the promise of improved employee health and cost savings to companies

What Does “Integrated” Mean?

- Integrated programs use data on a number of measures of employee well-being to create targeted programs addressing:
 - Work-related injury and illness prevention
 - Medical and pharmacy management
 - Health promotion
 - Demand management
 - Return-to-work
 - Employee assistance
 - Disease management

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However -- moving to an integrated approach to employee well-being can be challenging. . .

Challenges to Creating Integrated Approaches

- Interest in -- and responsibility for -- a range of employee health-related issues may be found in a number of different company functions— most commonly, health and safety, human resources, employee assistance, or security ...BUT
- Fragmentation of ownership and differing perceptions regarding the limits/possibilities of employer efforts to positively impact employee health can present barriers to effective action

Challenges to Success

- Functional silos
- Lack of management support
- Failure to involve employees in planning
- Unclear goals
- Lack of benchmarks

Tips for Success

- Benchmark with companies with successful programs
- Ensure that all relevant functions are engaged in needs assessment and program planning and evaluation

Tips for Success

- Learn about approaches to “making the business case” for integrated programs, including information on characterizing potential benefits in financial terms, e.g. Return on Investment (ROI)
- Plan for evaluation and allow enough time for new programs to show an effect before determining whether they have met planning goals

Information Resources

- NIOSH WorkLife Initiative Home Page
- American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM)
- Integrated Benefits Institute (IBI)
- Institute for Health and Productivity Management (IHPM)

Infectious Diseases – the Value of an Integrated Approach

Infectious diseases can present significant costs to employers

- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- Health care costs
- Disability
- Employee replacement costs

Infectious Diseases – the Value of an Integrated Approach (cont.)

- Employees may not have access to reliable sources of information
- Employees may need encouragement to take steps to prevent or address infectious diseases
 - Seasonal influenza vaccine campaigns
- Some infectious disease threats have the potential to impact business continuity
 - A potential influenza pandemic

Integrated Models: Future Directions

- Dissemination of information about characteristics of successful (effective) programs in place now
- Intervention effectiveness research to provide:
 - Evidence supporting specific programmatic approaches
 - Data on the impact of organizational factors
 - Data on the impact of wellness initiatives on work-related injuries and illnesses