

Prevention as a Promising Business Strategy

From chaos to confidence in five proven steps

A Special White Paper Report by Scott Foster, President, Wellco



"Facts do not cease to exist just because they are ignored."
Aldous Huxley

What happens to your credit card bill if you pay only the minimum monthly payment? It gets much worse doesn't it? If you're like most organizations, that's also exactly what's happening to your health care costs right now. Preventable illness makes up more than 70% of your medical costs and may consume half of your corporate profits yet more than 95% of your dollars are spent on treatment rather than prevention. That's exactly like paying your minimum monthly payment without paying down the principle. Until you do something differently, your organization's preventable health risks will predictably become costly medical treatments at the cost of an additional 11% to your annual health insurance bill. Employer medical benefit plans are historically weak in defining promising disease prevention and early detection. Implementing five proven strategies to expand your current preventive services can certainly stop health risks before they become even more dangerous and costly.

Get the facts

Ask your benefit provider or health plan for a list of your top 10 medical, prescription, diagnosis, and procedure costs. Also, determine your bottom line annual medical cost payments. Track and evaluate these key metrics annually. Treat your benefit administrator as a vested management partner and find out what cost-saving benefit changes (other than cost-shifting) or enhancements they will help you implement.

Move science into coverage

Eighty percent of your health care costs are related to ten modifiable risk factors. Research shows that providing the right preventive services as part of your medical benefits can provide a significant return on your investment. The National Business Group on Health recently developed a comprehensive publication for employers to reduce medical costs, *A Purchaser's Guide to Clinical*

Preventive Services: Moving Science into Coverage (Purchaser's Guide). The guide includes a *Life Course Chart* for adults, children, and pregnancy that evaluates coverage of 46 clinical preventive services. Use the guides and charts to plan, negotiate benefit structures, and to select the most effective preventive services. Consult with a qualified corporate health and wellness consulting firm for further resources, including prioritization assistance and strategic implementation.

Promote what you have

Emphasizing and covering preventive services will greatly improve the utilization of many important preventive services such as tobacco cessation and cancer screenings. Emphasize coverage and the importance of the clinical preventive services from *A Purchaser's Guide* along with any other preventive programs you offer (e.g., Nurse advice line, EAP, health coaching, self-care resources).

Cover 100 percent of prevention

Employee co-pays and deductibles have risen by about \$600 each over the past 10 years. They have become discouraged and cannot afford continued increases any more than you can as an organization. Employees should never be discouraged from preventive care that has been proven to prevent dangerous and costly conditions. Respected recommendations like those made in the *Purchaser's Guide*, periodic physician examinations, and health behavior change programs are the foundation for long-term health cost containment. The employer should fund 100 percent of first-dollar coverage through medical benefits or reimbursed under a health savings account. In other words, the employee should not pay anything even if they have not met their deductible.

Make it too good to pass up

Consider bringing some of the most appropriate services onsite as part of your corporate wellness program or health risk appraisal. Provide a convenient conference room for them to participate during work hours. Arrange on-time, private appointments. Communicate that the programs are completely confidential and 100% company-paid. Consider an incentive such as a company t-shirt, raffle ticket, or gift card as an extra bonus to boost participation. Learn more about HealthHammer™, the first and only Zero Trend Appraisal® by visiting Wellco's website.

Prevention can dramatically lower your overall health care costs-once you've discovered which ones work. By using the strategies above, you're likely to overcome chaos and move closer to a healthier bottom line.

About Scott Foster and Wellco

Scott Foster is President of Wellco. Wellco works with organizations who want to measurably improve health costs and conditions. Wellco specializes in health ROI systems, health risk appraisals, corporate wellness programs, speaking, and consulting. Wellco is the developer of the award winning HealthHammer™, the first and only Zero Trend Appraisal® system. Scott has generated millions of dollars in cost savings for organizations and is a highly popular speaker and consultant. Scott works with Fortune 500 companies to small businesses, including Home Depot, MetLife, SBC, and 3M. Scott is a consultant for the Michigan Department of Health, Chairperson of the Michigan Cardiovascular Business Alliance, a featured writer and columnist for publications such as "Health Michigan" and an Executive Committee Chairperson of the Oakland County Wellness Coalition (a strategic alliance of prestigious organizations such as Automation Alley and 28 Chambers of Commerce). Scott is the facilitator of wellnessroi.com, a resource that provides interviews and commentary from the nation's wellness superstars. Often featured as a media expert, he is certified as a Health Promotion Director by the world-renowned Cooper Clinic in Dallas, and he was awarded a Lipid Clinic facilitation certificate by Chicago's Midwest Lipid Clinic. Scott has previously served as a hospital administrator and clinician. For more information, visit www.welcocorp.com or call toll-free (866) 636-WELL (9355).



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