



FROM THE QUARTERLY PARTNERWELL PULSE REPORT

Where We've Been & Where We're Going: Employee Wellbeing

Wellbeing programs that are siloed from the rest of an organization's initiatives, policies, and culture **will continue to struggle to move the needle.**

Our PartnerWell team is focused on effective leadership engagement in creating cultures of health and wellbeing that are purpose-driven and embedded.

Wellbeing in the workplace continues to evolve alongside the needs of advancing workforces. As we envision what the next era of organizational wellbeing looks like, let's first revisit the evolution of this industry.

Throughout this article, we will highlight some considerations for how you can continue to evolve your wellbeing offerings and why they originally came to be.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Health & Safety

Early on, wellbeing in the workplace (not yet referred to as such) existed almost exclusively in the context of the workers' physical health and safety. Lacking federal regulation in the US, working conditions were often perilous.¹ Physical working conditions improved with regulations to hold employers accountable, with the

primary goal of decreasing injuries and deaths nationwide.

- » Consideration for leaders: Is your health and safety team connected to your wellbeing initiatives?

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

The emergence of EAPs in the mid-1900s focused on solving "*people problems while also increasing productivity*."² In addition to workplace safety, this programming stemmed from the desire to address substance misuse and mental health issues in the workplace.

- » Consideration for leaders: How much engagement are you observing in your EAP program? Are you training your leaders and managers on how to talk about mental health in the workplace?

Tobacco Cessation

Following the 1964 Surgeon General's Report on smoking and health, efforts to reduce use of tobacco gained significant attention and traction.³ Mitigating the considerable impacts of smoking on wellbeing and health plan costs has driven organizations and health plans alike to promote and offer smoking cessation programs. These important efforts remain in place today with the popular rise of e-cigarettes or vapes.⁴

- » Consideration for leaders: In today's world, what other positive changes can we encourage at work? For example, the impacts of loneliness on our health is similar to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.⁵

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Health Risk Assessments

The late 20th century found interest in health risk assessments, which developed alongside the rising costs of healthcare and the desire to mitigate health risks and escalating costs.⁶ Employers and health plans continue to use health risk assessments to raise awareness of unhealthy behaviors and risk factors to motivate healthy actions, lifestyle changes, and prevent disease.

- » *Considerations for leaders:* How are you educating your employees on how to use health assessment data? Are they tracking their health over time?

Preventive Care

In 1990, the “Healthy People” 10-year campaigns began as a national effort to improve health and wellbeing nationwide. This established a national priority to increase preventive behaviors, reduce major causes of death from chronic disease and reduce risk factors.⁷ Workplaces followed suit by promoting healthy actions via communications, health fairs, and classes.

- » *Considerations for leaders:* Are you giving your workforce time off to go get their preventive care screening? Incentives may be falling short to drive engagement.

Mitigating Healthcare Costs & Addressing Whole Person Health

In the 21st century, healthcare costs continue to rise, fueling employers to invest further in employee health as a tactic to mitigate costs. Employers offering incentives to encourage healthy behaviors became more widespread. Corporate wellbeing offerings expanded beyond more than just an employee's physical health, creating a holistic

benefit offering that includes a wide range of support from mental health to financial health.

- » *Considerations for leaders:* How can you evolve wellbeing initiatives to not solely rely on external influences? Encouraging intrinsic motivators versus offering incentives can facilitate sustainable health behaviors for the long run.

Mental Health & Digital Health Solutions

Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic forced employers to embrace remote and hybrid work. It brought the mental health conversation even further into the spotlight. Following COVID, employers are navigating a boom of specialized digital point solutions with the opportunity to offer employees a wide range of dedicated support tools focused on improving health and wellbeing.

- » *Considerations for leaders:* Point solution fatigue is real. How can you consolidate your vendors and drive employee engagement to make the most of your existing offerings?

WHERE WE'RE GOING

Ultimately, the goal of supporting and improving health and wellbeing remains the same, but the approach continues to shift alongside the changing nature of our work, our technology, and the state of our world. We anticipate the next iteration of effective wellbeing programming to focus around the following:

- » Human sustainability
- » Employee engagement
- » Recognition

Reach out to the PartnerWell team: partnerwell@tpgrp.com

This material is to be used for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should any of the materials be construed as professional or medical advice.

1. Gallup, Inc. (2023, August 29). State of the global workplace report. Retrieved from Gallup.com.

2. McKinsey & Company. (2021, March 11). Addressing employee burnout: Are you solving the right problem? https://www.mckinsey.com/mhi/our-insights/addressing-employee-burnout-are-you-solving-the-right-problem?utm_source=chatgpt.com