



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Thursday, August 29, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: MARGARET M. WEICHERT, ACTING DIRECTOR

Subject: 2018 WellCheck Results

I am pleased to share the results of WellCheck 2018, an online assessment administered as part of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) continual effort to leverage data analytics and research to advance human capital management. The President's Management Agenda sets forth a bold vision for effective and efficient mission achievement and improved service to America through effective management of a 21st century Federal workforce. This includes supporting employees through management practices and programs that are proven to help maximize employee engagement and productivity. WellCheck helps agencies prioritize high-impact, evidence-based health behavior improvement strategies by assessing worksite health and wellness programs to identify opportunities for improvement. OPM offers all Federal agencies a bi-annual opportunity to submit wellness and related program data for analysis and feedback reports. Results from the 2018 administration of WellCheck (WC) indicate Federal agencies continue to sustain and improve worksite health and wellness programs to promote workforce health, productivity, and engagement. This memorandum shares a background of the WellCheck data call, high-level results, top 2018 worksites, and recommendations for agencies.

BACKGROUND

As work demands rise and budgets tighten, agencies must strategically plan how to achieve their mission and maximize productivity. Among the many resources are worksite health and wellness programs. Well-designed worksite wellness programs contribute to effective performance management and employee engagement and are an important part of employee total compensation packages. A healthier workforce can improve productivity, increase employee engagement, reduce costs associated with healthcare, disability, and workers' compensation, and contribute to a culture of excellence.

WellCheck is based on the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Worksite Health ScoreCard \(HSC\)](#). The survey has 16 sections with evidence-based questions that assess how health promotion strategies are implemented at a worksite. These strategies focus on worksite programs shown to be effective in preventing disease and promoting health and well-being. Agencies can use WellCheck to assess how a comprehensive health promotion and disease prevention program is offered to their employees, to help identify program gaps, and to set priorities for the following health topics:

- Tobacco-Free Living
- Nutrition
- Lactation Support
- Physical Activity
- Weight Management
- Stress Management
- Depression
- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Signs, Symptoms, and Emergency Response to Heart Attack and Stroke
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
- Organizational Supports
- Linkages to Related Programs

Each WellCheck question represents an individual health promotion strategy or intervention for that topic. The point value assigned to each survey item reflects 1) the level of impact that the strategy has on the intended health behaviors or outcomes, and 2) the strength of scientific evidence supporting this impact. A value ranging from 1 to 3 points is given for each question, based on whether it represents a good (1), better (2), or best practice (3). Item point values from each section are then aggregated to create one composite WellCheck score.

OPM will provide each participating agency Worksite Health and Wellness Coordinator with an agency specific-report with information on how to use the results and recommended next steps.

RESULTS

181 worksites from 31 different Federal agencies participated in the WC assessment. Participating agencies show continued growth and commitment to employee health and evidence-based programming across the Federal Government. The average score across participating worksites was 67% (191 out of 286 possible points). Individual worksite scores ranged from 32 to a perfect score of 286. On average, agencies scored the highest in addressing vaccine-preventable diseases, occupational health and safety, and tobacco-free living. Agencies have the most room for improvement in the areas of nutrition, organizational supports, and supports for nursing employees.

High-impact strategies are evidence-based strategies that are known to improve the health of employees when they are used as part of comprehensive worksite wellness programs. The high-impact wellness strategies that agencies use the most are:

- Encouraging reporting of injuries and near misses (93%);
- Having one or more functioning Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in place (88%);

- Promoting influenza (flu) vaccinations through brochures, videos, posters, pamphlets, newsletters or other written or online information that address the benefits of influenza vaccinations (88%);
- Providing a private space (other than a restroom) that may be used by an employee to express breast milk (87%); and
- Providing environmental supports for recreation or physical activity (87%).

TOP AGENCY WORKSITES

The top WellCheck 2018 worksites represent a variety of Federal agencies and wide geographic span. The ten worksites with the highest scores were:

1. NASA—Ames Research Center
2. Housing and Urban Development—Region 2
3. Department of Homeland Security—ICE HQ
4. Environmental Protection Agency—Region 2 Office (New York, New York)
5. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
6. National Archives and Records Administration—Nixon Library
7. Department of Agriculture—Forest Service National Headquarters
8. Department of Health and Human Services—NIH
9. Department of Health and Human Services—CDC Headquarters
10. Department of Health and Human Services —HRSA

OPM plans to host forums to showcase promising practices and lessons learned from these leading worksites. Congratulations to the WellCheck Top Ten!

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Engaging in strategic, impactful actions will continue the positive momentum to implement comprehensive, evidence-based programs. OPM recommends the following five actionable tactics based on the WellCheck results:

- 1. Implement Required Strategies:** In addition to taking action to implement all strategies required by law, we recommend that agencies take actions strongly encouraged in governmentwide guidance to the maximum extent possible. Agencies are encouraged to work towards a goal of 100% implementation of these strategies:

Required by Law:

- All Federal agencies are required by law to provide a private space (other than a restroom) that may be used by an employee to express breast milk
- The law also requires flexible scheduling, unpaid break times, and/or paid break times to allow mothers to express breast milk

Strongly Encouraged in Federal Governmentwide guidance to Support Employee Engagement:

- Provide work-life balance/life-skills programs
 - Provide training for managers on the value of worksite health and wellness programs
 - Establish a policy that allows employees to use flexible scheduling or excused absence to participate in worksite health and wellness activities
 - Refer tobacco users to a tobacco cessation telephone quit line
 - Make the majority of the food and beverage choices available in vending machines, cafeterias, snack bars, or other purchase points healthier food items
 - Identify healthier food and beverage choices with signs or symbols
 - Post signs at elevators, stairwell entrances or exits and other key locations that encourage employees to use the stairs
 - Coordinate programs for occupational health and safety with programs for health promotion and wellness
 - Have one or more functioning AEDs in place
 - Have an emergency response plan that addresses acute heart attack and stroke events
 - Have an adequate number of AED units such that a person can be reached within 3 to 5 minutes of collapse
 - Perform routine maintenance or testing on all AEDs
 - Provide information to your local community Emergency Medical Service providers so they are aware that your worksite has an AED in place for an emergency response
 - Offer access to a nationally-recognized training course on Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) that includes training on AED usage
 - Encourage reporting of injuries and near misses
 - Provide opportunities for employee input on hazards and solutions
 - Have a program to investigate the causes of injuries or illnesses
 - Provide all new workers with formal, comprehensive training on how to avoid accidents or injury on the job
 - Promote influenza (flu) vaccinations through brochures, videos, posters, pamphlets, newsletters or other written or online information that address the benefits of influenza vaccinations
2. **Prioritize High-Impact Strategies:** Create action plans to implement high-impact and other appropriate wellness strategies to the maximum extent possible. Agencies should comprehensively review their results and benchmark using their report to make data-driven decisions. OPM will assist agencies with Action Planning as the next step in the full cycle of WellCheck. Resources specific to High Impact Strategies are included in an attachment to this Memorandum.
3. **Communicate the Importance of Using Health Insurance Benefits:** Emphasize the availability of prevention benefits through Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program insurance, and encourage employees to use these benefits. Many preventive care and support services are available at no or low cost to beneficiaries, including check-ups, vaccinations, tobacco cessation treatment, mental health assessment and referral and comprehensive support for nursing mothers.
4. **Concentrate Efforts on Nutrition and Lactation Support:** Nutrition and lactation supports are two areas of worksite health and wellness programs that are not

comprehensively supported in Federal agencies based on the WellCheck results. Federal agencies are required by law to provide private space and reasonable time for nursing. Additionally, FEHB carriers provide practical support such as pumps, consultation with credentialed professionals and education. A concentrated effort by individual agencies and the broader community can move the needle and provide critical support that help employees reduce medical costs, improve productivity, and advance their state of health. Agencies should carefully review their WellCheck results related to nutrition and lactation support, identify program gaps, and create action plans to improve these areas to the maximum extent possible.

5. Improve Organizational Support: Take action to create a working environment where employee health and safety are valued, supported, and promoted through worksite health and wellness programs, policies, benefits, and environmental supports. Federal agencies can integrate the worksite health and wellness program into regular agency operations and align the program to the agency's overall goals through the following organizational support:

- A comprehensive health and wellness policy;
- Training for managers on the value of worksite health and wellness;
- Involvement from management at all levels in program implementation and engagement;
- An active worksite health and wellness committee;
- Senior Leader sponsorship of wellness programs and interventions;
- An official communications strategy; and
- Robust metrics and evaluation programs.

These critical elements have the potential to influence all of the other strategies measured on WellCheck and drive a highly-effective worksite health and wellness program that support employee engagement and increased productivity.

OPM will support agencies in achieving progress on the actionable recommendations above through government-wide efforts and by offering individual consultations. Specifically, OPM will showcase promising practices and lessons learned related to organizational support, nutrition programs, lactation support, and required strategies; facilitate interagency learning among agencies working to address similar challenges; provide implementation guidance and training related to high-impact strategies; and share resources to better communicate insurance benefits. OPM will also continue to provide agencies with the opportunity for analysis of agency collected program data through bi-annual administration of WellCheck. Together, we can help ensure the Federal workforce is healthy, engaged, and empowered.

If you have any questions regarding WellCheck 2018, you may contact Corey Adams (corey.adams@opm.gov) or Lucy Polk (lucy.polk@opm.gov).

Attachment: High Impact Health and Wellness Strategies (see attached 508-conformant PDF below)

cc: Deputy CHCOs, HR Directors, CIGIE, Federal Worksite Health and Wellness Coordinators, and National Prevention Council Members