

Don't Throw Out the Baby with the Bathwater - A Measured Response to Critics of Workplace Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Programs

Recently, several individuals have raised doubt about the efficacy and cost-benefit of workplace health promotion and disease prevention programs (otherwise known as wellness programs). These critics cast doubt on the very core of worksite wellness efforts and have generated widespread publicity. They argue against the benefits of prevention and workplace health promotion, question the validity of ROI estimates, and aim to restrict the use of outcomes-based wellness incentives. These criticisms have created confusion in the market. This session will re-state the business case for adopting evidence-based, comprehensive, and well-resourced workplace health promotion programs. It will also review the methods used to evaluate these programs in "real world" settings, but also acknowledge the limitations of "average" programs that may not produce expected outcomes. Finally, Dr. Goetzel will comment on value-on-investment (VOI) approaches to assessment of workplace programs in contrast to the more traditional return-on-investment (ROI) models.

Learning Objectives

Following this session participants will be able to:

- Identify three main issues related to the controversy of whether workplace health promotion programs "work"
- Cite three recent studies that have been publicized as evidence workplace programs do *not* work
- Cite three studies or articles that counter the negative publicity related to workplace programs
- List three elements necessary for achieving successful workplace health promotion outcomes

About our Speaker



Ron Goetzel, PhD

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Ron Goetzel is vice president of consulting and applied research for Truven Health Analytics and a research professor for Emory University. Ron is responsible for leading research projects and consulting services focusing on the relationship between health and well-being, and work-related productivity. He is nationally recognized and widely published in the areas of return-on-investment (ROI), data analysis, program evaluation, outcomes research, and health and productivity measurement. Ron has served as principal investigator for projects supported by Medicare, NHLBI, and the CDC, as well as dozens of business organizations, including HERO. Ron was previously with Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems. Ron is also president and CEO of The Health Project, which is responsible for establishing and managing the C. Everett Koop National Health Awards. Since 1994, The Health Project has been the premier organization that identifies and recognizes exemplar health promotion programs. The Health Project is dedicated to improving Americans' health and reducing the need and demand for medical services through good health practices.