



Best Practices that Drive Health and Well-Being Success

HERO has gathered substantial evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of workplace health and well-being (HWB) programs when incorporating recommended best practices. Most recently, HERO research on 845 organizations that completed the HERO Health and Well-being Best Practices Scorecard in Collaboration with Mercer® (HERO Scorecard) has shown that organizational and leadership support, incentives, comprehensive programs, and program integration predict effectiveness. Furthermore, organizational and leadership support are the strongest predictors of program participation, health and medical cost impact, and employee perceptions of organizational support for HWB.

When the media reports on negative findings in the literature, it can create confusion about the effectiveness of HWB programs. For example, Song and Baicker recently published a follow-up study to their 2019 paper assessing the impact of a HWB program offered by BJ's Wholesale Club. Results at three-year follow-up were similar to the results reported at 18 months. Their results included significant improvements in weight management behaviors, but no impact on health, financial, or business outcomes.

Faced with these results, it is crucial to ask if the program being evaluated relies on time-tested and demonstrated effective best practices for HWB offerings. The chart below provides a comparison of the HWB program implemented in the BJ's Wholesale Club study (Song and Baicker) to HERO's recommended best practices.

If you want to see how your program compares, please go to hero-health.org/hero-scorecard to complete Version 5 of the HERO Scorecard.

References

- Imboden et al. Development and validity of a workplace health promotion best practices assessment. *JOEM*. 2020;62(1):18-24.
- Grossmeier et al. Workplace well-being factors that predict employee participation, health, and medical cost impact, and perceived support. *AJHP*. 2020;34(4):349-358.
- Song, Z. & Baicker K. Health and economic outcomes up to three years after a workplace wellness program: A randomized controlled trial. *Health Affairs*. 2021; 40(6):951–960.

HERO Recommended Best Practices

BJ's
Wholesale Study

Organizational & Leadership Support

- A formal, written strategic plan
- Senior leaders see the connection between HWB and business results
- Support HWB policies
- Use and support employee champions to promote HWB
- Support mid-level managers and supervisors in their HWB efforts
- Target communications to diverse groups and positions
- Stakeholders regularly receive HWB performance data
- Engage employees at all levels of the organization
- Communicate health values
- Leadership support of HWB initiatives

Incentives

- Financial incentives for assessment-related activities
- Offer financial incentives in connection with HWB programs
- Benefit-eligible spouses/partners are able to earn incentives for assessment-related activities

Program Integration

- Integrate programs, communications, data, and strategy
- Integrate HWB programs with other employee benefits
- Integrate disability management program with organization HWB programs

Comprehensive Programs

- Health behavior change programs are offered to all eligible employees
- HWB programs are offered through multiple channels
- HWB programs offer robust features
- Offer lifestyle management programs
- Individually targeted and interactive lifestyle management services
- Offer disease management programs
- Provide tools to track HWB