

## 3 Ways to Prioritize Employee Health

In today's workplace environment, there is a greater emphasis for employers to prioritize employee health. Are you doing everything you can to create the healthiest culture for your staff? If you're looking to explore additional ways to improve your efforts, here are three ways to prioritize employee health and wellness.

### Prioritizing Physical Health and Safety

The first and maybe the most important consideration is the staff's physical safety as they go into the office to handle office-based or onsite work that cannot be done remotely. While many firms are attempting to find a balance between having personnel report to work physically and enjoying work-from-home dynamics, there are still adjustments that must be made to ensure workplace health and safety.

Your company may incorporate requirements for masks, social distancing, or vaccines. Other company leaders enforce employee-level decisions at the opposite end of the spectrum regarding mandates. But health and wellness in the workplace goes beyond the headlines and controversial topics of mandates. [Prioritizing health and safety](#) means business leaders need to review every aspect of the employee's day through the lens of identifying potential risks and developing strategies to mitigate those risks.

Double down on workplace cleaning efforts, including hiring a cleaning service to routinely sanitize the office. Create a strict policy for self-management of illness and symptoms, allowing employees to take themselves home without missing pay or fear of adverse consequences for doing so when they don't feel well. A policy like this will help you avoid virus outbreaks and protect your healthy team members.

Other physical safety improvements companies are embracing today include more robust safety guidelines for all employees, not just those who do risky work. Outline how workers can protect themselves from tired eyes at the computer just as much as you coach teams about safe heavy lifting practices. Encourage breaks and [physical movement throughout the workday](#), too, prioritizing rest times for those who do physical work and stretching for any desk warriors.

Revisit your workplace first aid kits to ensure you have proper supplies in the event of an emergency. But also explore offering water and snacks to your teams to promote proper hydration and healthy energy options throughout the workday, as well.

## Prioritizing Mental Health and Wellness

As a business leader, you're likely feeling the stress of the company bottom-line and productivity levels. Many industries have successfully rebounded post-COVID. However, there are other economic factors in today's environment that can signify more unknowns around every corner.

Your teams are feeling similar pressures of the job. But at the individual level, workers can also be coping with household stresses, including family finances, the health of family members, and general anxiety about job security.

To reach your company productivity goals, consider implementing a series of enhancements to your policies that prioritize employees' mental health. Be transparent about recognizing your staff's need for mental health support and communicate every layer of effort you enact. It can start with flexibility for time-off requests for mental health breaks.

Other mental health considerations include allowing workers to re-create their workspaces, onsite and remote. The days of micromanaging are over, especially for those team members whose roles don't require a "clock-in, clock-out" schedule. Give them the autonomy they need to breathe and find their grooves. And you'll find they inspire themselves to better productivity. Of course, that doesn't mean you don't continue to maintain accountability measures or enforce consequences for anyone taking advantage of the system. But most employees are eager to work and do a good job. Trust they'll know what they need to keep their mental health in check. Shift your focus to getting results, and stop worrying about being "busy."

Your company may offer mental health services as part of the benefits plan. Don't just offer it, though. Do your best to promote it. Much like you would encourage employees to take well-earned vacation days, encourage them to leverage the mental health coverage benefits you have in place. It will demonstrate to them you care about their overall stress and anxiety.

## Prioritizing Employee Health Coverage They Want

Let's talk about your health insurance benefits plan. The type of plan you choose will directly affect how well your employees can manage their health and wellness. It's this recent trend of health prioritization that may warrant your consideration of an Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement in lieu of the traditional group health plans you've organized in years past.

Your employees will be more apt to take advantage of routine physicals and doctor visits if they're free like they are with an ICHRA plan and ACA Marketplace essential health benefits provision. If your company group plan has restrictions on participating healthcare providers, your teams might avoid doctor visits because of the increased out-of-pocket costs, too.

Because the ICHRA model allows participating employees the control to choose affordable ACA Marketplace plans, leverage essential health benefits, and get reimbursed for precise out-of-pocket costs, it is the health plan solution that allows for better prioritization of employee health. Your employees can select the coverage their household needs and be comfortable managing their own wellness best practices. They'll make those annual physical appointments, get the routine scans, and fill those necessary prescriptions. And your company bottom-line will appreciate the reduced costs associated with supporting an ICHRA platform and issuing reimbursements.

Another key benefit of the ICHRA platform is the ability to offer health reimbursements to employee types who otherwise wouldn't qualify in a traditional coverage plan setup. You can keep temporary, part-time, and seasonal staff just as healthy as you would your full-time or salaried staff.

When your employees are healthy and well, they'll perform better and achieve workplace productivity goals. When you prioritize health and wellness, your teams will feel you care about them as they contribute to your company objectives. Consider some of these enhancements other companies are making as they shift to prioritize employee health.