

# Incentive designs for driving employee engagement

**Incentives can motivate employees** to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors that will improve their wellbeing. Adopting healthier behaviors is the key to minimizing health risks, lowering the prevalence of chronic disease, and improving overall wellbeing. Employees who feel better are more engaged in their work, contributing to improved productivity and lower turnover.



## 4 steps to designing a wellbeing incentive program:

### 1. Determine your objectives.

What behaviors do you want to motivate employees to improve?  
Use data to determine your objectives.

### 2. Choose your metrics.

Which activities do you want to encourage employee engagement with? Consider workplace and community activities in addition to preventive care (i.e. annual well visit).

### 3. Decide on the value and type of incentive.

Higher value incentives can drive higher participation levels, but a well-designed and well-communicated program can also.

### 4. Track your metrics.

Tracking metrics can help determine overall engagement with your wellbeing program and any changes in employee behaviors. Tracking also provides direction for future programming.

## To design the most effective incentive program, follow these best practices:

- Keep the program simple, both to communicate and to administer.
- Make sure the incentive is worth the effort required to earn it. Incentives can be anything from inexpensive raffle prizes to extra days off to reduced healthcare premiums or HSA contributions.
- Make sure everyone has an opportunity to earn the incentive. Give people choices of activities to complete.
- Allow enough time to complete the activities – registration campaigns like signing up for an Excellus BlueCross BlueShield online account can be done in a month; preventive care activities usually need a full year.
- Communicate! Make sure to communicate your program before it starts. Communicate clearly, regularly and through a variety of channels.
- Keep it positive. Lifelong healthy habits are more likely to develop with consistent positive reinforcement over a long period of time.
- Work with your Excellus BlueCross BlueShield Wellbeing Engagement Consultant to guide you through developing a comprehensive incentive program. They can even provide data and reporting on certain metrics.

## Sample incentive program

### Objective of program:

Empower employees to take care of their health by encouraging them to get appropriate preventive care.

### Timeframe:

January 1 – December 31

### Incentive type and amount:

\$500 HSA contribution

### How to earn it:

- ✓ Have an annual well visit with your PCP
- ✓ Participate in the company walking challenge
- ✓ Register for an Excellus BlueCross BlueShield online account



Incentives can help drive healthier behaviors, but they are most effective when they are used in conjunction with a comprehensive workplace wellbeing strategy that supports employees' wellbeing holistically. **Contact your Excellus BlueCross BlueShield Wellbeing Engagement Consultant** to help you develop an effective strategy and to discuss reporting options available through the health plan.



### Check with your legal counsel to ensure your wellness incentive program is compliant with the Affordable Care Act wellness program requirements.

The U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and the Treasury issued final regulations on incentives for nondiscriminatory wellness programs in group health plans under the Affordable Care Act and the HIPAA nondiscrimination provisions.

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield recommends all employers review these requirements and connect with your legal counsel to ensure your program aligns with these requirements.