Workplace screenings are a critical component of corporate wellness initiatives. By measuring key aspects of health, including blood pressure, weight, cholesterol and glucose, among others, these screenings provide valuable insights into the health of employees and help identify potential risk factors early on, enabling employers to implement more targeted health and wellness initiatives and track progress and improvement over time. Screening programs continue to evolve and adapt to meet the needs of employers and employees and offer valuable benefits, including driving engagement, improving health outcomes and reducing costs.

Drive Engagement in Health

Like overall wellness and well-being initiatives, a one-size-fits-all approach to screenings does not work. Customizing screening programs to meet the needs of each unique organization and their workforce can help improve participation. Tailored programs that account for the health needs of employees, provide convenient locations and times, and offer resources to take the next step, are more effective at engaging employees, which can help increase workplace productivity, improve outcomes and reduce overall costs.

There are a number of other ways to encourage participation in screenings in order to reap the benefit of this important tool, including:

• Incentives – Research, including a 2015 study from the Employee Benefit Research Institute, shows that offering employees a financial or other type of incentive to complete their screening increases participation.

• Communications – Ongoing communications from employers about upcoming screenings and what to expect are critical to raise awareness and encourage participation. This can include emails, intranet announcements, posters and flyers in common areas, mailers to employees’ homes, and even automated technologies like text messages and phone calls.

• Convenience – As mentioned above, holding screenings when and where it is convenient for employees will ensure attendance. For example, having screenings in the dining room between shifts at a busy restaurant will make it easy for employees to participate. Programs should be tailored to meet the needs of each organization to ensure maximum participation and benefits.

Further, when coupled with on-site health education and coaching, biometric screenings can help influence positive behavior change, improving the health of employees while helping to control rising healthcare costs. A Health Advocate study published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine in 2015 found that employees identified as having hypertension during a workplace screening were twice as likely to be diagnosed with hypertension, or fill a prescription for a hypertension medication, in the month following the event. For many employees, screenings are a first step toward better engagement in their health.
Know Your Numbers

Workplace screenings offer insights into the health of the workforce, as well as the leading drivers of health-related costs, providing both organizations and their employees with a starting point toward their goals.

For employers, aggregate data from screenings helps to create a baseline from which to tailor wellness strategies moving forward. By using this information as a foundation, it is possible to measure year-over-year results and improvements. This is an opportunity to see the progress and value of wellness initiatives as well as adjust programming as needed to meet the needs of an evolving workforce. By understanding what is working and what is not, organizations can avoid wasting money on ineffective programs and invest where it will have an impact for their employees and bottom line.

For employees, having an understanding of their health and potential risks enables and motivates them to take action to improve their health. The Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine study referenced previously also found that 68 percent of employees whose hypertension was discovered during a workplace biometric screening had no previous record of diagnosis or treatment. These workplace screenings have the potential to identify undiagnosed conditions like hypertension in employees and lead those employees to seek treatment.

By learning more about the current state of their health through workplace screenings and knowing their numbers, employees can be motivated to set goals based on the results and take necessary next steps toward improving their health. These screening programs can have a big impact in helping employees understand their risk and take action, improving outcomes and reducing healthcare costs for both individual employees and organizations.

Integrate for Maximum Impact

Workplace health screenings and the resulting data from these events can be integrated into existing wellness and benefits programs to maximize and amplify the impact. By connecting screenings with other initiatives, employers can optimize the experience for employees and make it easy to take advantage of more benefits offerings, increasing the effectiveness of the entire program. Plus, the ability to plug data from screenings into other programs like wellness and disease management can help employers identify high-risk individuals and ensure communications and outreach are appropriately targeted.

As an example, because screenings help employees identify areas of risk they’d like to improve, such as high blood pressure, they can then decide to sign up for a walking program and nutrition webinar series to help address this issue. Once they’ve reached their goal, their employer may offer a discounted insurance premium to reward them. This integrated approach combining biometric screenings with wellness provides opportunities for multiple touch points with employees, especially those at high risk, increasing the opportunity for success. When workplace health screenings are integrated with other benefit programs, it’s possible to realize even more value and benefits and maximize the potential outcomes.

Workplace screening programs provide convenient, professional health assessments on-site to help identify employees’ risk for some of the most common chronic conditions, but they provide great value well beyond the initial screenings. By identifying issues sooner, employees can take steps to improve their health, leading to reduced costs for themselves and their organization. Screenings are an integral cornerstone for workplace wellness programs and offer value and benefits to both employers and employees.