

Employer Self Assessment: Communicating with Your Workforce

Helping employees manage their health is a sound investment in human capital. Employers can help their workforce learn about quality health care, stay healthy and manage their health conditions. A healthy workforce can lead to lower health care premiums for businesses and fewer sick days. Put simply, employees who feel good work better. Employees who are well are more likely to show up and be productive than employees who are sick. We need employers to work with their employees so they know how to recognize quality care and can work with their providers to manage their health.

This quick 6-question self-assessment is intended to help your organization understand where to start communicating about health issues with your employees. While there is no one model or approach to communicating with employees, many employers have found that it's best to begin with one or two small messaging campaigns. You can then expand the program going forward, incorporating feedback and lessons learned from the initial campaign(s). The Communications Toolkit is one way to help you communicate with employees about getting good quality health care.

Questions	Answer	Score
1. Does your organization currently provide health care benefits to your employees?	Yes = continue with assessment / No = skip assessment and turn to back page	
2. Does your organization explain to employees the reasons for selecting the health plan options offered?	Yes = 2 / No = 0	
3. Do you have the ability to communicate <u>directly</u> with most, if not all, of your employees via e-mail?	Yes = 2 / No = 0	
4. Do your employees use organization-specific information about your health care benefits on your intranet or other IT network?	Yes = 2 / No = 0	
5. Outside of open-enrollment, do you communicate directly with employees about individual health and wellness issues?	Yes = 2 / No = 0	
6. Have you had positive experiences communicating about health care <u>quality</u> with employees?	Yes = 2 / No = 0	
Total		

The Communications Toolkit contains materials that can help your employees: 1) Make better health care decisions, 2) assume more “ownership” over their health care, and 3) increase their ability to take on new behaviors to improve their health and health care. **Based on your score above**, here are some suggested starting points. These documents can be downloaded and customized with your corporate logo or printed as is for distribution to your employees.

Suggested Starting Point	Score
Topic Area 1: Tips for Quality Care: These information sheets provide employees helpful information to make the most out of their health care appointments, including what to do before, during and after an appointment.	0 – 6
Topic Area 2: Healthcare Info on the Internet: A checklist to judge which websites to	

Suggested Starting Point	Score
trust and a list of recommended websites that have trustworthy health information.	
Topic Area 3: Basics of Health Care Quality: These information sheets help explain what quality health care is, what health care works best and examples of how quality information can be used by patients.	7 – 8
Topic Area 4: Quality and Cost: These information sheets help inform your employees on how to get the care that works best for their condition, how to get the right amount of care (without receiving unnecessary care) and how to be informed and involved in decisions that affect their health care.	9 – 10

Suggestions for Employers Who Do Not Provide Health Care Benefits

If you don't currently offer health care benefits to your employees, they may not be accustomed to receiving health care information from you. Additionally, as an organization, you probably have minimal experience communicating about health care issues. Therefore, begin your dialog with practical and easy-to-use suggestions, such as providing straight-forward information about where to find reliable health care information on the Internet.

The Toolkit (<http://businessgrouphealth.org/usinginformation>) includes recommended websites that provide reliable, accurate health information that is backed up by solid medical research. The Toolkit also includes information to help your employees find health information on their own – and to judge whether the information they find is high quality. Not all health information on the Internet is reliable or accurate. To find health information that is trustworthy, consumers need to pick websites carefully.

The resources in Topic Area 2 are all about helping your employees do a better job at the things they're already doing. In this way, the resources help you begin an important conversation with your employees about health care quality and other health care issues.

Suggested Starting Point
Topic Area 2: Healthcare Info on the Internet – 3 Resource Files
1. Health information on the Internet: A checklist to help you judge which websites to trust. This document gives a checklist of eight features to look for in evaluating health websites. It also identifies four government websites that are good places to start an Internet search and includes general tips about using information from websites. (6 pages)
2. A list of recommended websites that have trustworthy health information. These resources describe websites that offer accurate, up-to-date health information that is based on evidence from medical research. (4 pages)
3. Finding trustworthy health information: Identifying reliable websites. This one-page overview offers information about how to identify reliable websites, and includes four government websites that are good places to start. (1 page)

For more information or resources to help you communicate health information with your workforce, including visit the **Communications Toolkit** at <http://businessgrouphealth.org/usinginformation>.