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Expanding Workplace Wellness Initiatives into Our Communities

Our Country's Current State

According to a 2017 Gallup World Poll, the United States ranks 17th in life satisfaction scores.¹ For the first time ever, Americans' life expectancies are on the decline. The US ranks number one in obesity and chronic conditions caused by obesity worldwide². It's evident that our country has room for improvement when it comes to health and well-being.

Where to Begin?

Make Well-being a Priority

Here's the good news: about 75% of employers are doing something by offering wellness programs and benefits to support their employees in taking steps toward a healthier lifestyle.

However, a broader approach will be required to begin and sustain long-term behavior change that can improve health and well-being nationwide. To create a true Culture of Health, individuals, employers, and institutions must work together. With collaboration, we can increase access to the resources individuals need and provide opportunities to make healthier choices. In a Culture of Health, communities flourish and individuals thrive.

Community Culture of Health: A Success Story

Organizations ready to make a bigger difference can look for ways to expand wellness beyond the workplace. Here's one success story: A rural school system built a grant-funded gymnasium with state of the art fitness equipment. Recognizing the lack of access to fitness

facilities for residents, as well as the need for levy support, the school opened the gym to the public during evening and weekend hours. The results were clear. This one investment brought significant community engagement, improved individual health, and led to the passing of the school levy.



Follow These Best Practices

Are you ready to consider ways to expand your organization's wellness efforts into the community? Start with the best practices established by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation³ :

1. Create a shared vision
2. Establish community buy-in
3. Evaluate access and feasibility
4. Implement, assess, and refine

¹ "State of the States." Gallup. 2019. Accessed January 30, 2019 https://news.gallup.com/poll/125066/State-States.aspx?g_source=link_NEWSV9&g_medium=TOPIC&g_campaign=item_&g_content=State%2520of%2520the%2520States

² "Obesity Update 2017." OECD. 2017. Accessed January 30, 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Obesity-Update-2017.pdf>

³ "Healthy Communities." Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. 2018. Access January 30, 2019. <https://www.rwjf.org/en/our-focus-areas/focus-areas/healthy-communities.html>