

2014

SURVEY RESULTS



Wellness Benefits

Introduction

This year's Wellness Benefits Survey paints a complex and, at times, conflicting picture. With the reforms of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) affecting all but the smallest organizations, it remains in an employer's best interest to reduce insurance claims and promote general wellness as much as possible. However, while 68 percent of respondents are currently using or considering wellness programs and the same number report improvement in the overall health of employees, 56 percent of respondents have yet to realize any health-related cost reductions. Yet this initial negativity is countered by the fact that only 3 percent of employers find wellness programs to be ineffective at reaching company wellness goals.

Part of the problem could stem from the design of many wellness programs. For the past four years, employers have rated time and lack of employee participation as the biggest barriers to wellness programming. Since a plurality of employers indicated they had developed wellness programs in-house, it's possible that these respondents could see greater returns from their wellness programs if they had effective outlines upon which to build a turnkey wellness program.

The results of this year's Wellness Benefits Survey will help you get a feel for how employers across the country are using wellness programs and what they are experiencing as a result.

The purpose of this survey was to discover the current trends in wellness programs and gauge future employer needs as more companies include wellness benefits in their overall health plans.

For more information, or for help establishing an effective wellness program, contact New England Employee Benefits Co., Inc..

A total of 966 respondents completed this survey.

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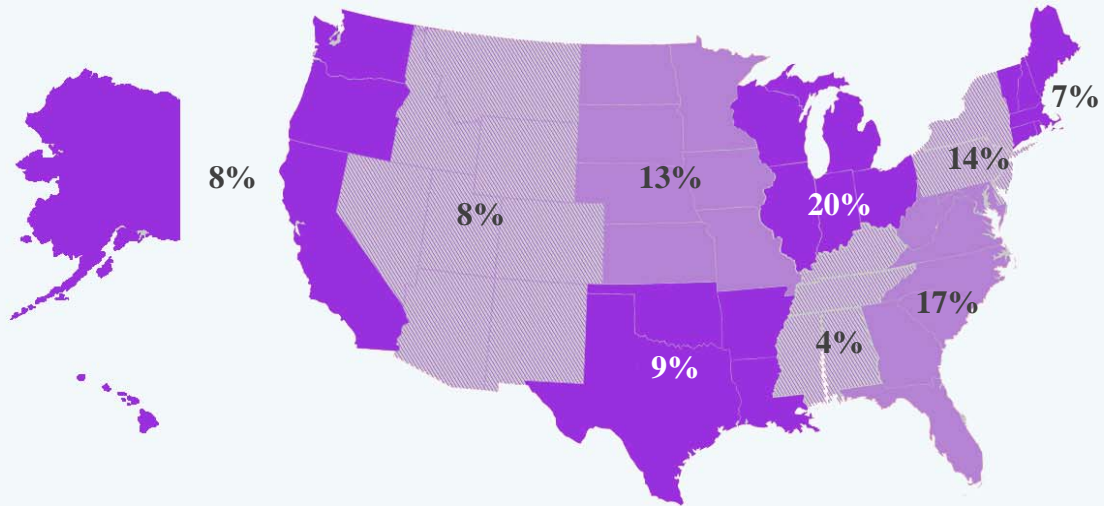
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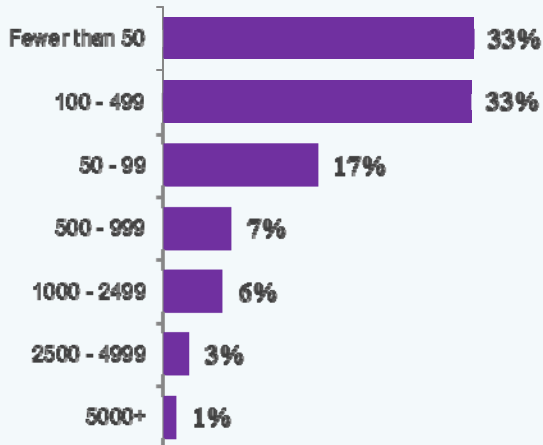
Demographics

This survey was completed by employers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Just like last year, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents were from organizations employing fewer than 500 employees.

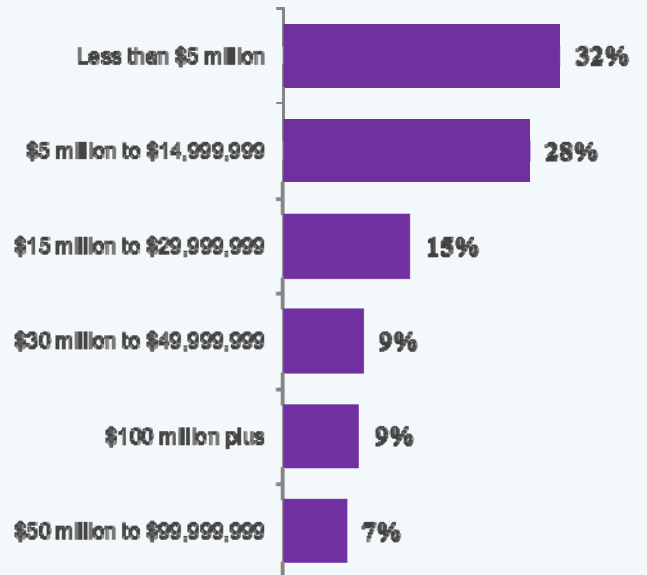
In which region is your organization based (the most employees)?



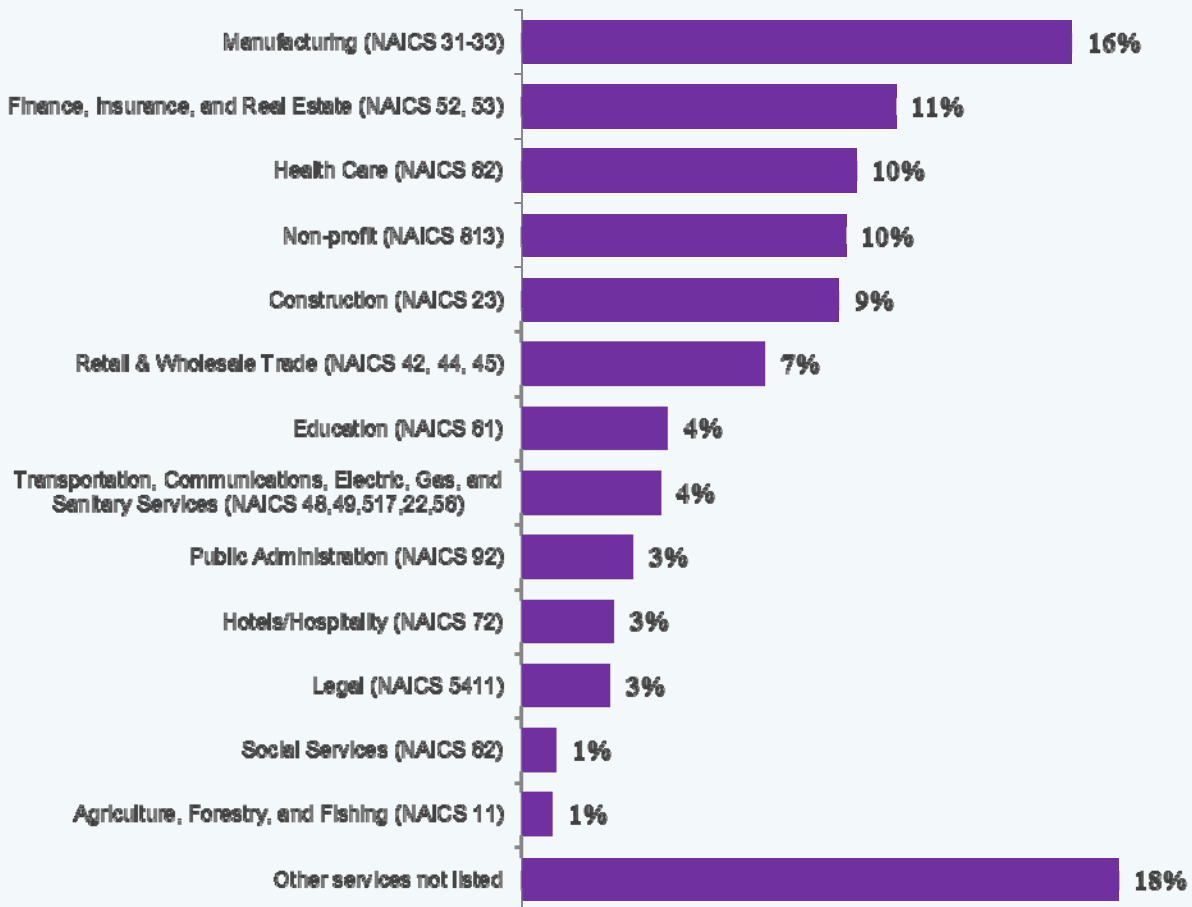
How many individuals are employed at your organization?



What is your organization's annual revenue?



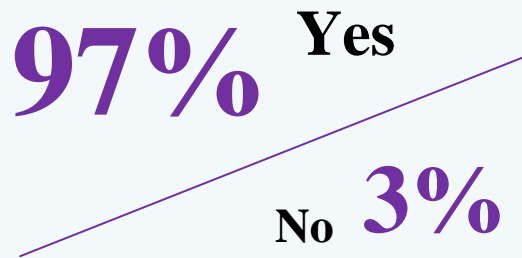
In which industry/sector does your organization operate?



Your Health Plan

The vast majority of respondents are offering health benefits to their employees. Of those, 61 percent are likely to ask their employees to pay more for their health insurance in 2015. This is roughly the exact same percentage (60) of respondents that were likely to increase employee costs in last year's survey. Fifty-five percent (up two points from last year) of respondents find workplace wellness programs to be a somewhat effective way of helping employers control the increasing costs of health insurance.

Are you offering health benefits to your employees?



Please indicate the likelihood of making changes to your health plan in the next year.

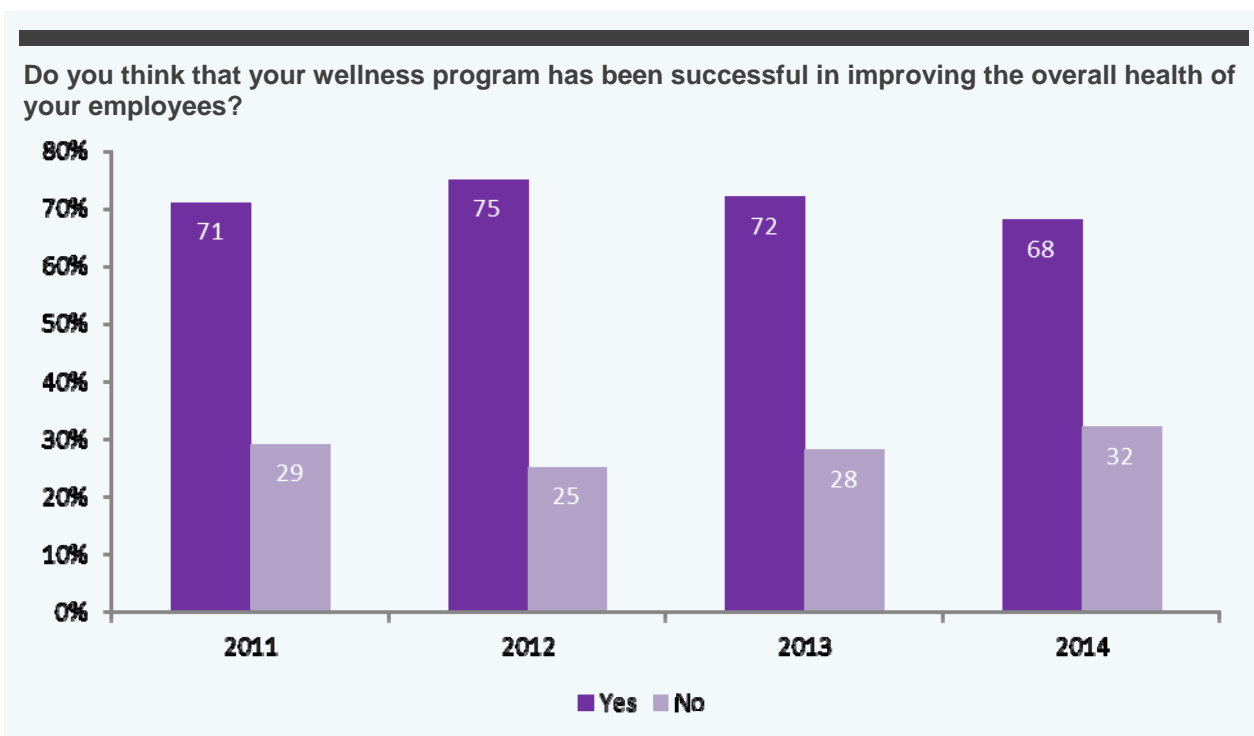
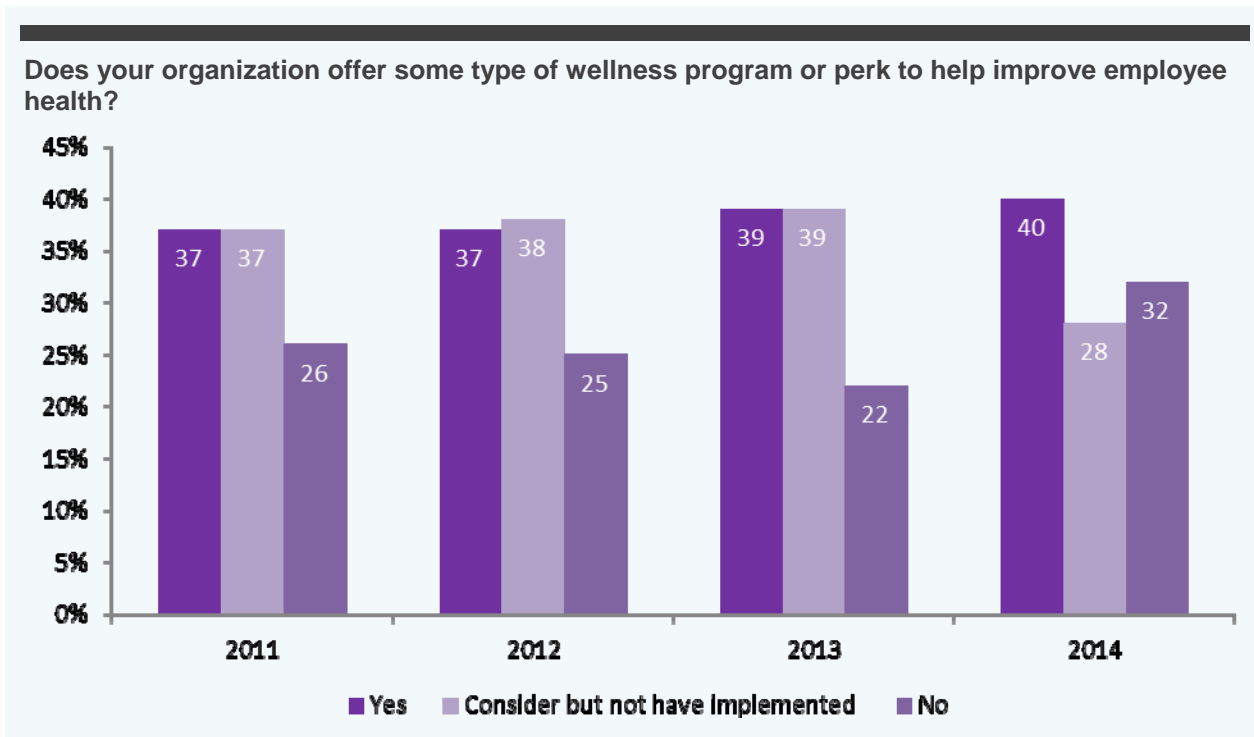
	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Too Likely	Not at All Likely	Don't Know
Increase the amount employees pay for health insurance	22%	39%	21%	12%	6%
Increase the amount employees pay for deductibles	9%	31%	37%	15%	8%
Increase the amount employees pay for office visits, copays or coinsurance	6%	28%	43%	16%	8%
Increase the amount of Wellness Benefits	4%	27%	45%	16%	8%
Increase the amount employees pay for prescription drugs	8%	27%	38%	17%	10%
Drop coverage completely	1%	2%	10%	79%	8%
Introduce tiered networks for office visits or hospital stays	2%	12%	34%	33%	19%
Offer high-deductible health plan with a Health Reimbursement Arrangement	15%	17%	22%	36%	10%
Offer HSA-qualified high-deductible health plan	27%	16%	18%	29%	11%

Please rate how effective the following strategies are in reducing the growth of health insurance costs.

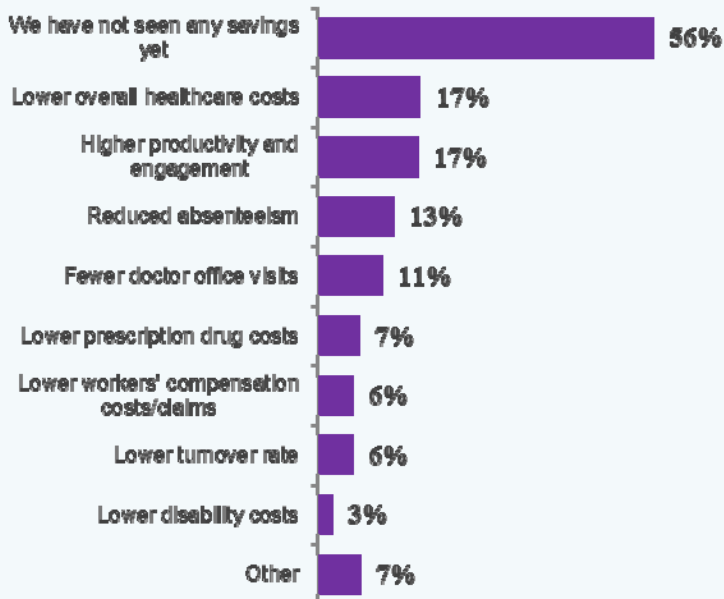
	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Too Effective	Not Effective at All	Don't Know
Workplace wellness programs	13%	42%	16%	3%	26%
Disease management programs	11%	36%	14%	2%	37%
Consumer-driven health plans (ex. HDHP combined with an HSA)	12%	32%	14%	3%	39%
Higher employee cost sharing	7%	34%	23%	10%	26%
Tighter managed care networks	3%	23%	25%	7%	41%
Smoking cessation programs	11%	33%	19%	4%	32%

Your Wellness Program

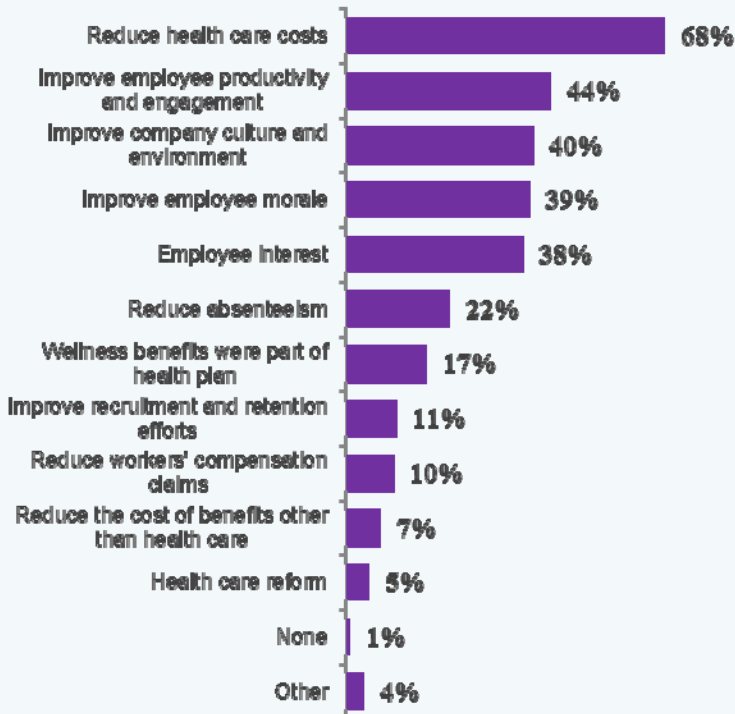
There has been significant movement in the numbers relating to wellness programs. While interest in wellness programs remains high overall, with 68 percent of respondents currently using or considering a wellness program, there has been a 10-point drop-off since 2013. The drop could be explained by looking at employer goals and expectations. By far, the most significant reason employers adopt wellness programs is to reduce health care costs. Yet over half of employers that responded said they have not yet seen a reduction in costs as a result of wellness initiatives. However, over two-thirds of employers continue to believe their wellness program has improved the health of their employees, suggesting that other factors influencing cost may be at play.



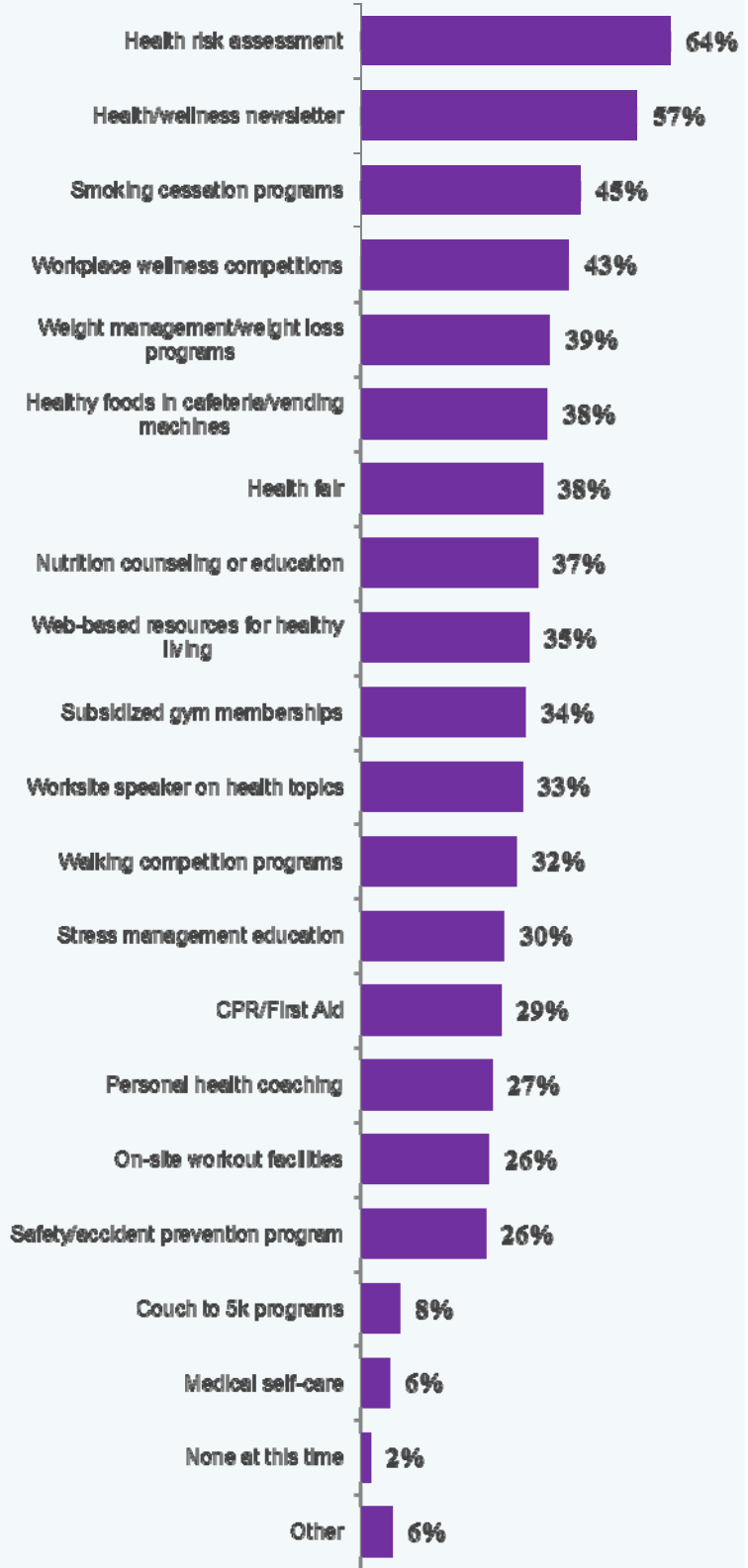
If you have seen a reduction in costs as a result of your wellness initiative, where have you seen savings?



What top three factors influenced your decision to implement a workplace wellness program?



What types of programs do you offer as part of your wellness initiative? Select all that apply.

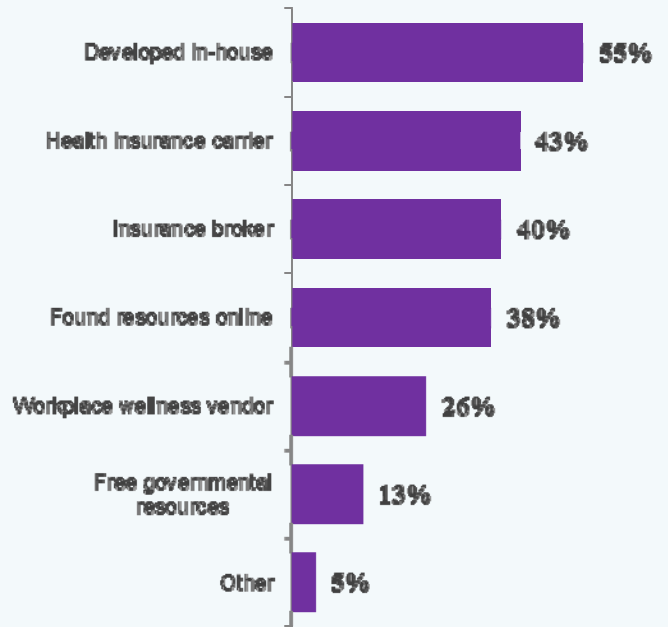


Use of Incentives

Studies show that incentives often increase wellness program participation and can play a significant role in determining the overall success of a workplace wellness program. Seventy-one percent of respondents understand this and are now using incentives in their wellness programs, up 18 points over the past two years. This is likely due in part to the fact that the ACA increased the allowable incentives in wellness programs.



Where did you get the materials to implement and conduct your organization's wellness programs? Select all that apply.



What type of participation incentives do you offer?



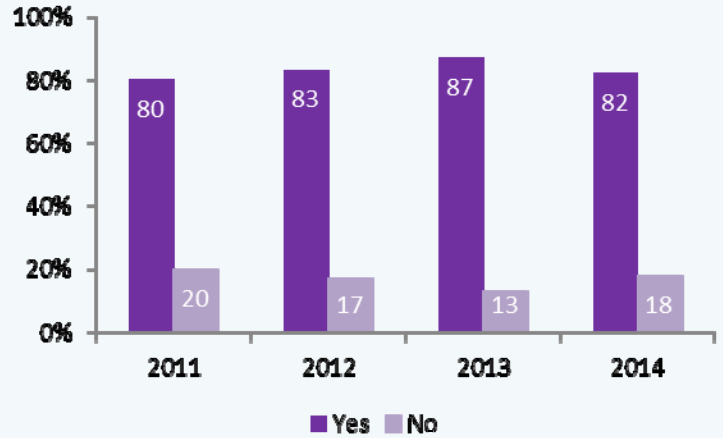
The Seven Cs

The Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA), an organization dedicated to the promotion of worksite wellness, has identified the seven best practices (The Seven Cs) for employers to follow when building a comprehensive, effective worksite wellness program within their organization. The seven steps are:

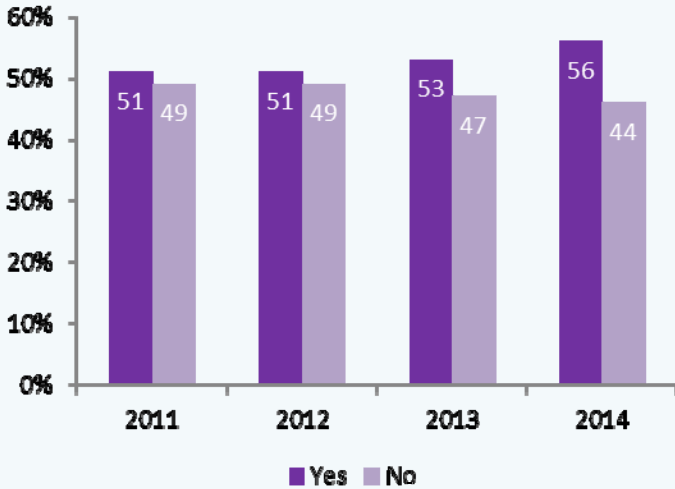
1. Capture senior-level support.
2. Create a wellness team.
3. Collect data that will drive your health initiatives.
4. Craft an annual operating plan.
5. Choose appropriate health initiatives.
6. Create a supportive environment.
7. Consistently evaluate your outcomes.

Your broker has resources to help you to implement the WELCOA best practices.

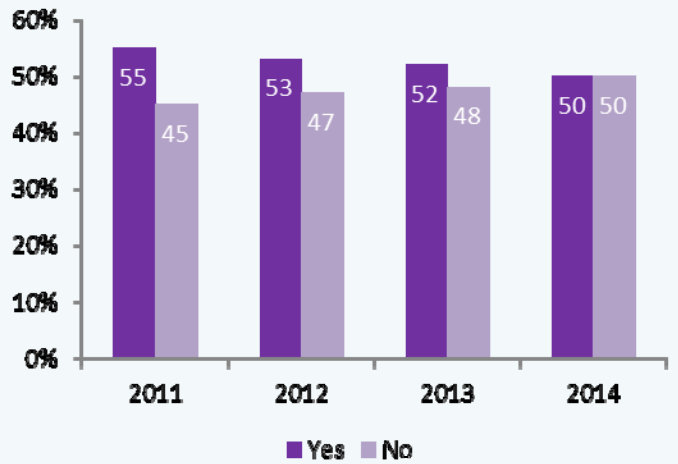
Have you captured senior-level support for your wellness program within your organization?



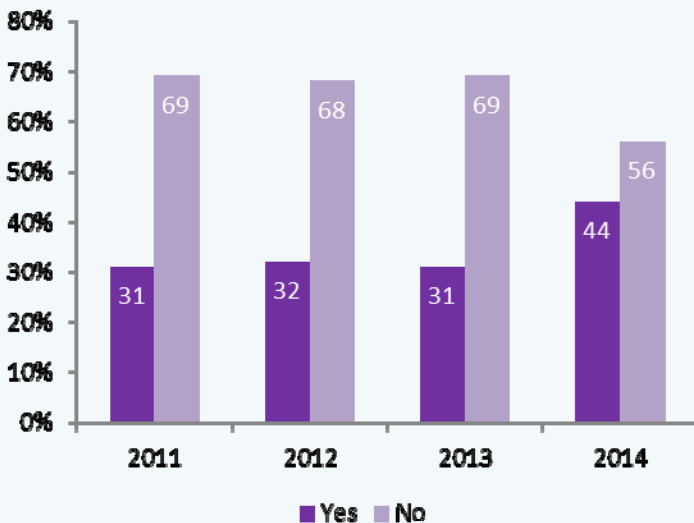
Have you created a wellness team within your organization?



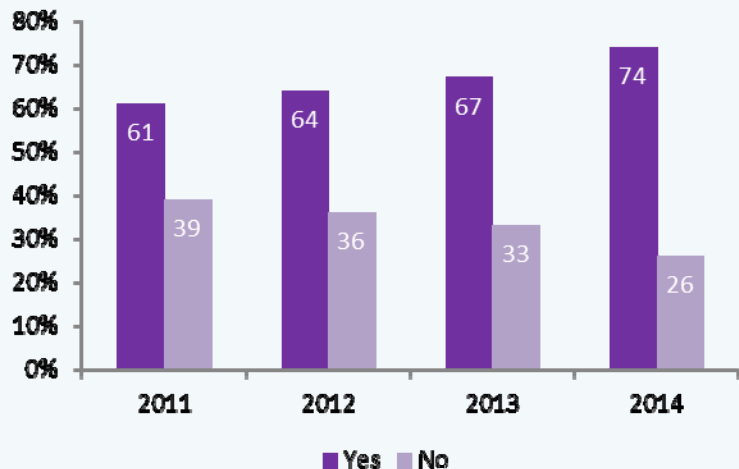
Have you collected and analyzed data to drive what health initiatives you offer as part of your wellness program?



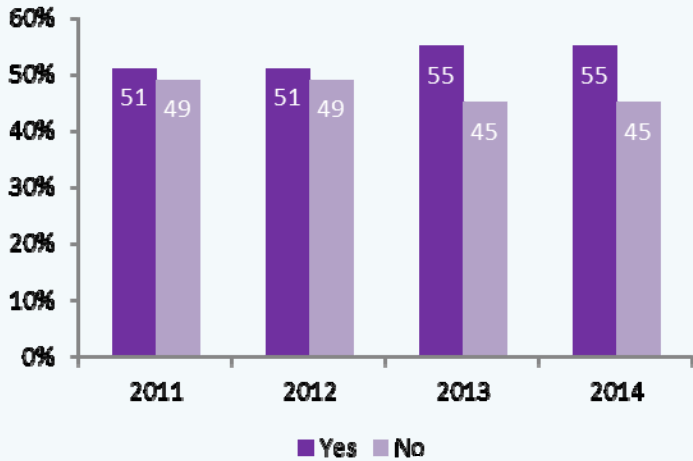
Have you crafted an operating plan to guide and support your wellness initiatives?



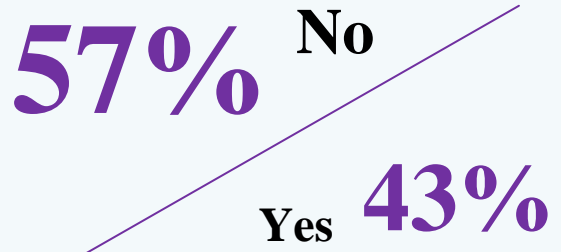
Have you created a supportive wellness environment?



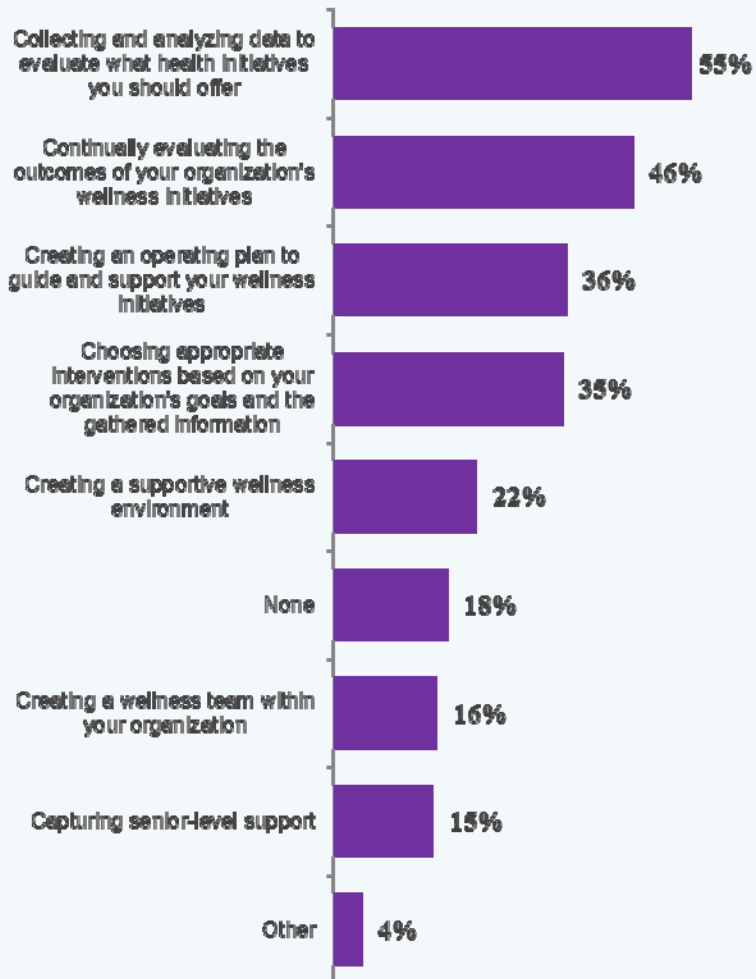
Are you consistently evaluating the outcomes of your wellness programs?



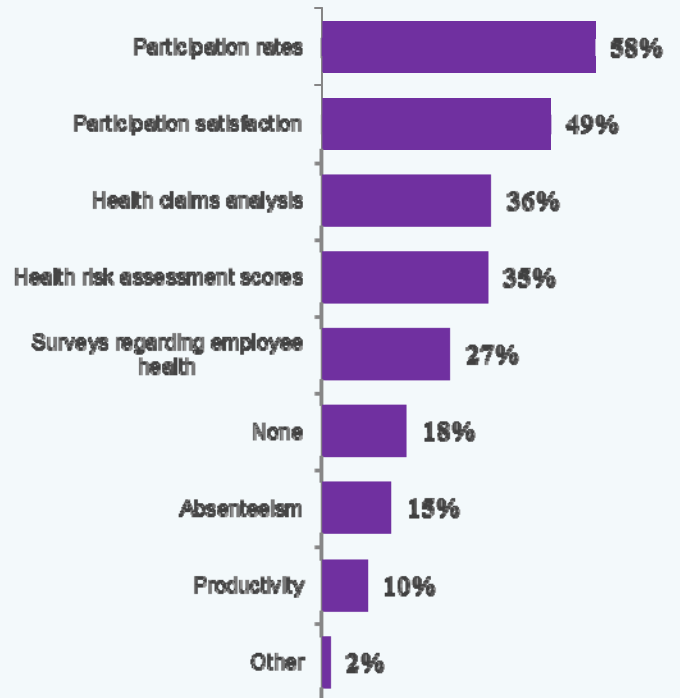
Have you chosen appropriate interventions to implement based on goals and all information gathered?



In what areas of implementing a successful wellness program can your insurance broker provide assistance?



What evaluation methods do you use?

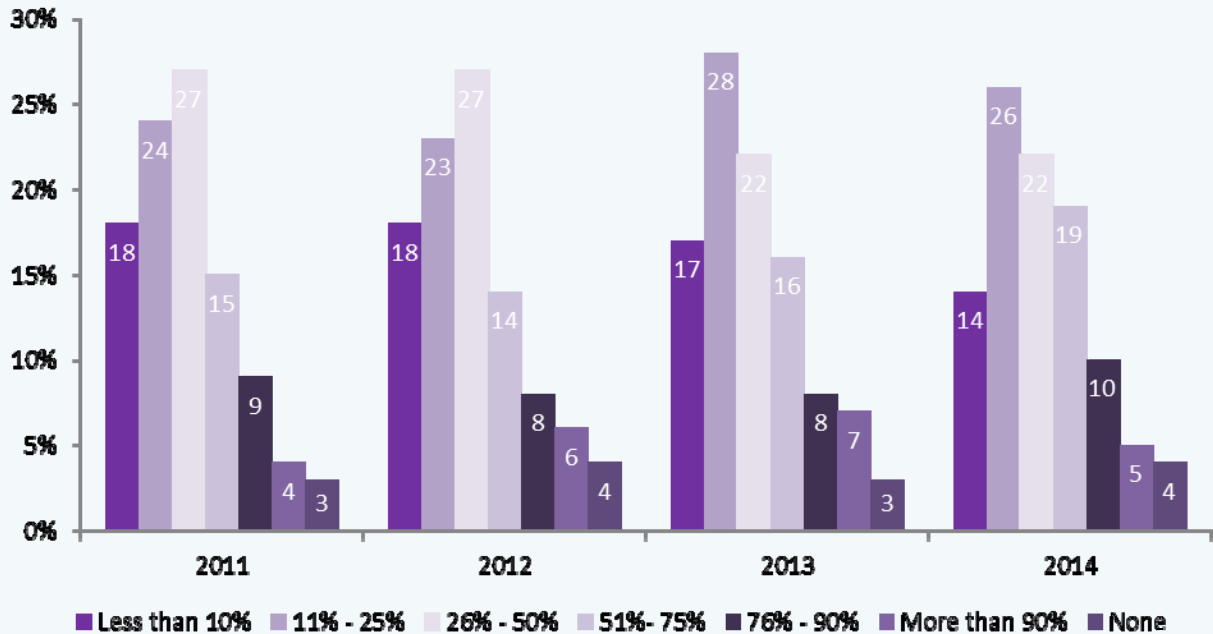


Wellness Program Needs

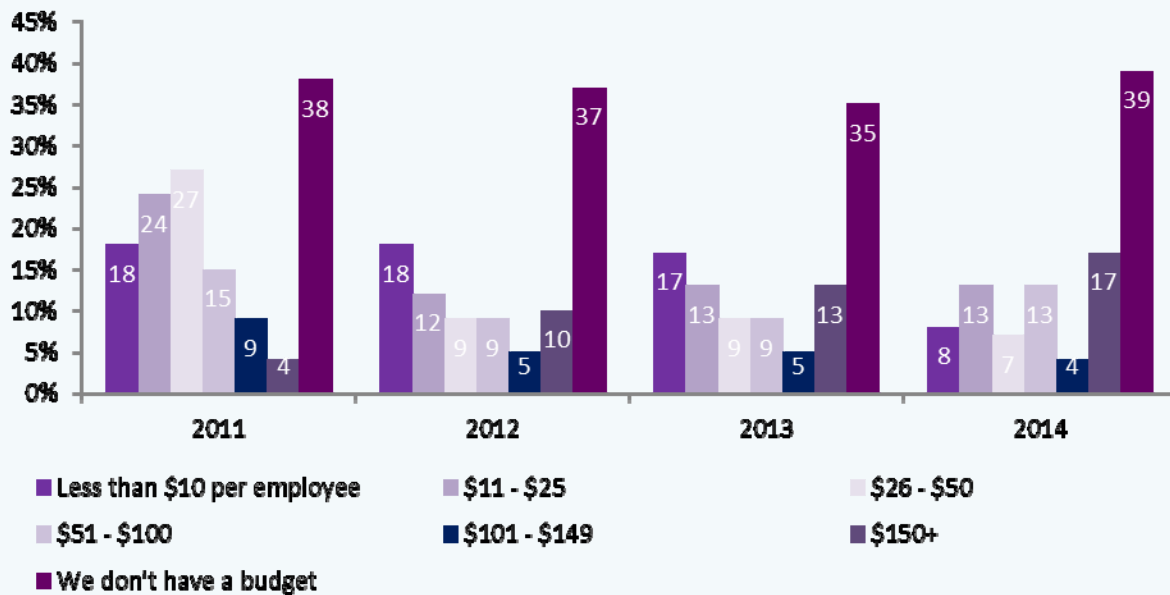
Aside from the barriers of time and money, lack of employee participation is frequently the reason wellness programs fail. While participation levels appear to have grown slightly, only 38 percent of employers that offer wellness programs have employee participation levels at or above 50 percent, and roughly 1 in 7 employers have employee participation rates of less than 10 percent.

The annual wellness program budget per employee also appears to have grown slightly since 2013, but here again there is a caveat: roughly 4 in 10 employers have no wellness budget.

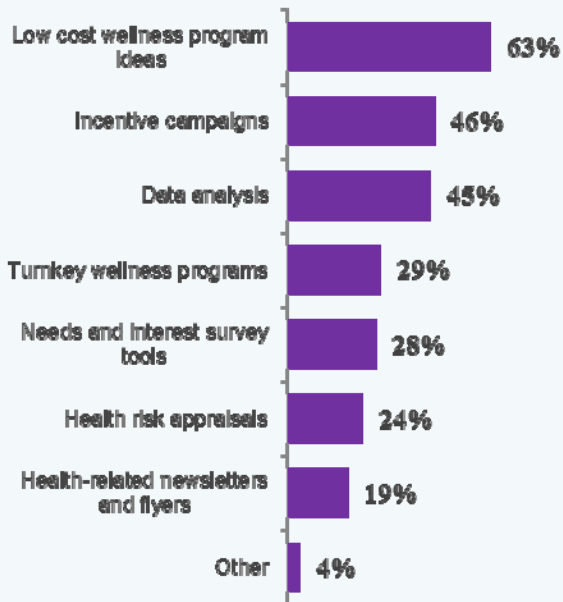
What percentage of your employees participates in company-sponsored wellness programs?



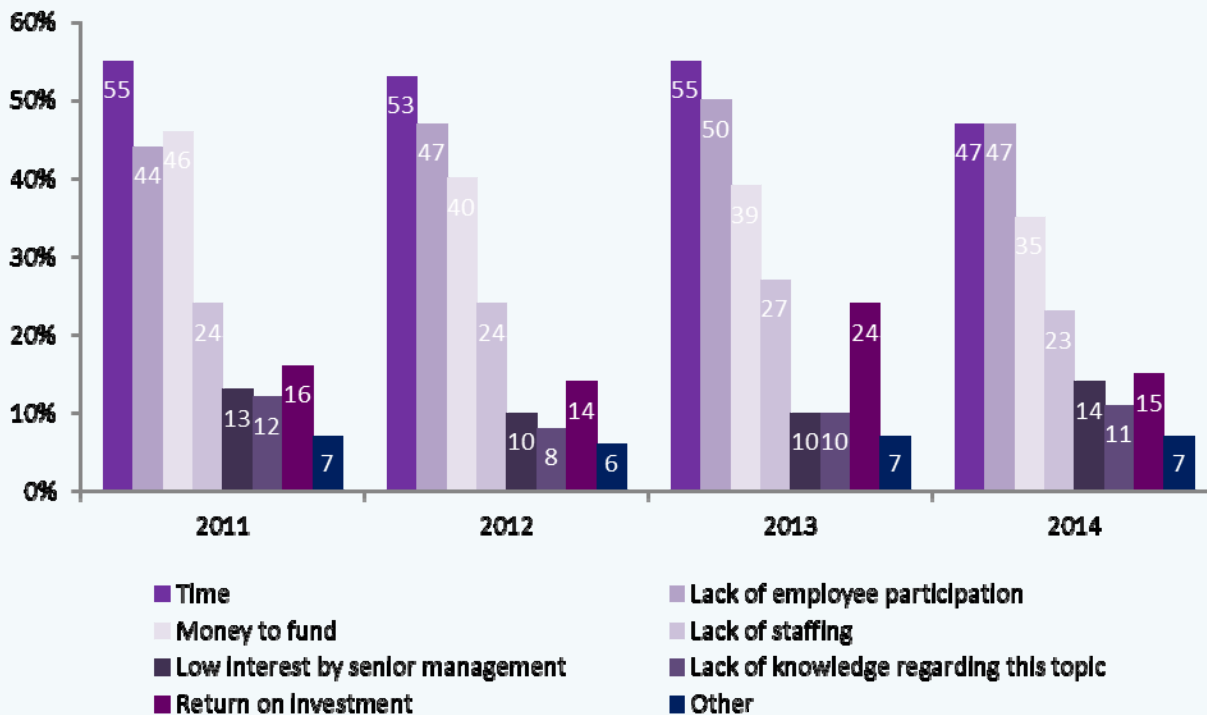
What is your annual budget per employee per year for the wellness program?



What are your greatest areas of need with regard to wellness program resources in the next two years? Please check all that apply.



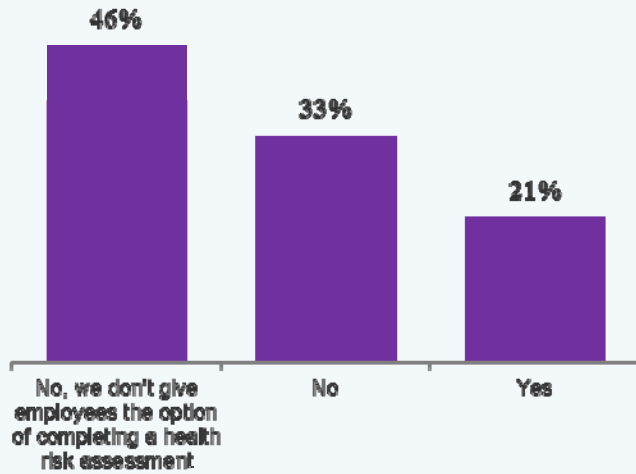
What is the biggest barrier you encounter regarding wellness programming?



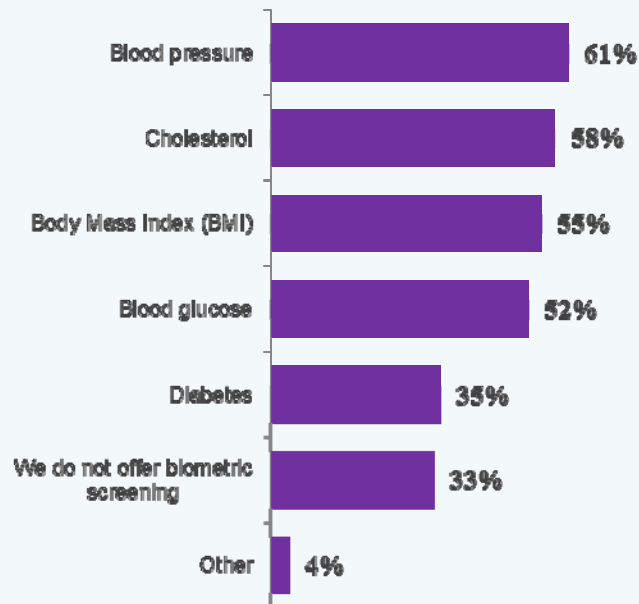
Health Risk Assessments

Health risk assessments apply techniques for determining the presence of disease and estimating the risk that someone with certain characteristics will develop a disease within a given time span. They can also be used by employers to identify major organization-wide health problems. Though health risk assessments can be great tools for communicating “wake-up calls” to employees regarding substandard health, the percentage of employers leveraging these assessments to encourage wellness program participation fell by 13 percentage points in 2014.

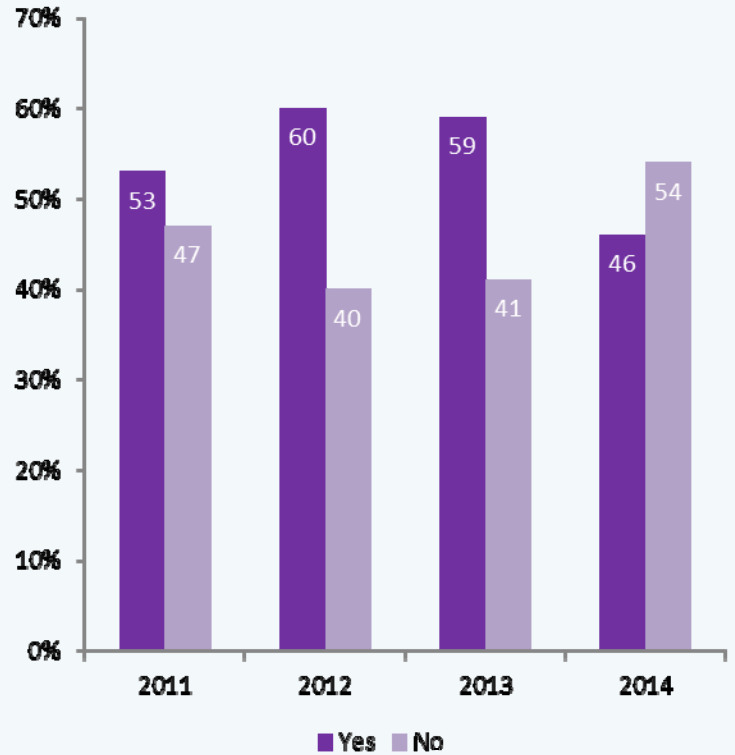
Do you offer a financial incentive to employees who complete a health risk assessment?



Do you offer any of the following biometric screening programs? Please check all that apply.



Do you use your health risk assessment as a way to encourage participation in your wellness program?



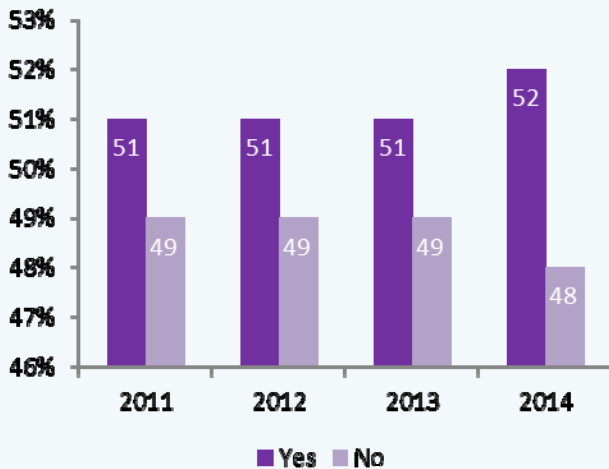
Disease Management

Disease management means reducing health care costs and improving the quality of life for individuals with chronic diseases by preventing or minimizing the effects of those diseases through integrative care. Since the inception on the Wellness Benefits Survey, diabetes and cholesterol have been the most popular disease management programs.

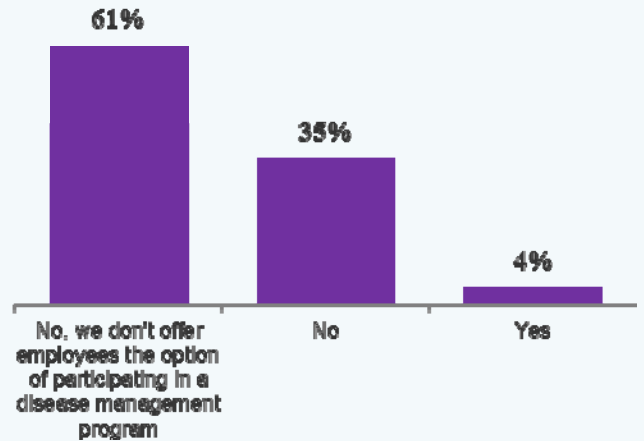
Employee Assistance Programs are services intended to help employees deal with personal problems that may be adversely affecting their work performance. The number of respondents who offer employee assistance programs rose one percentage point in 2014, and has remained at just over half of all employers for the past four years.

Contact New England Employee Benefits Co., Inc. to discuss how these survey results and this benchmarking information can assist you in your future benefit plan strategies.

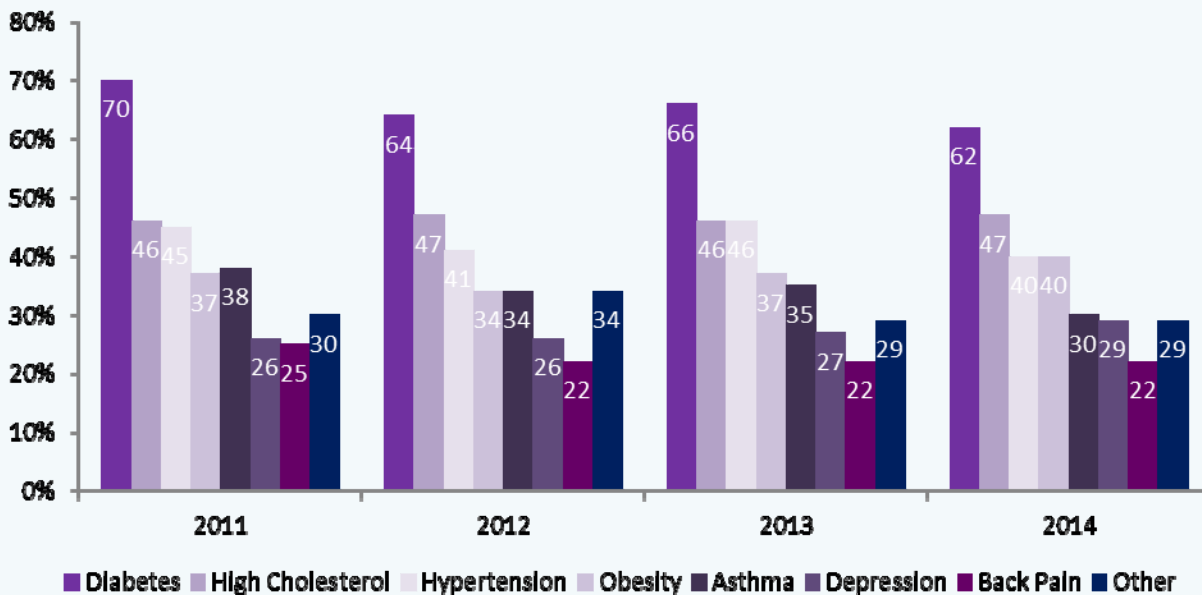
Do you have an employee assistance program?



Do you offer financial incentives to employees who participate in disease management programs?



What types of disease management programs do you offer?



This survey was conducted in the summer of 2014 through the website provided by New England Employee Benefits Co., Inc. The survey was anonymous, so responses have not been validated for statistical significance or margin of error.

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