

INVEST IN WELLNESS PROGRAMS AND REAP THE REWARDS ACROSS THE GLOBE

WELLNESS PROGRAMS ARE NOT BEING
LEVERAGED EQUALLY ACROSS ALL LOCATIONS



The big issues facing employers globally have many similarities. There is good evidence to suggest that investing in wellness programs can add value, both from the perspective of managing health care costs and the broader topic of employee engagement.

Regardless of location, size or industry, businesses around the globe are being asked to tighten their belts whilst at the same time get more from the talent they already have. It's certainly not an easy task, but recent studies, including findings from our Latin America Employee Benefits Trends Study, which looks at the markets of Brazil, Chile and Mexico, indicate that investing in

wellness programs

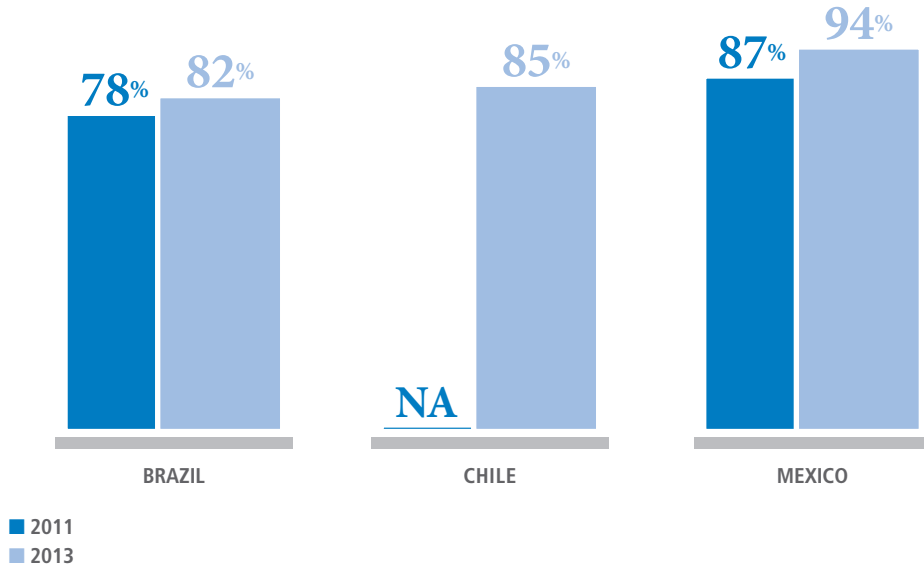
can help keep health care spending in check and improve employee engagement.



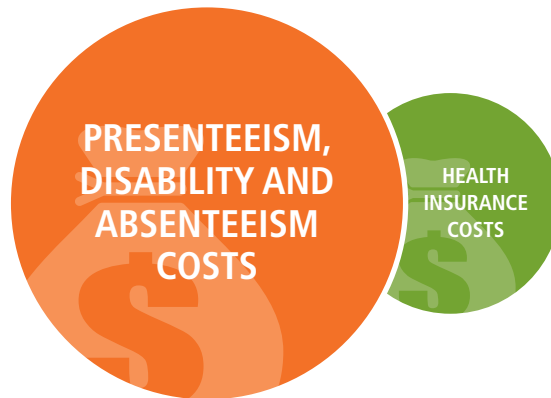
Reducing costs and improving health – is it possible?

Total health care spending across the globe currently exceeds \$6 trillion per year,¹ and spending is expected to increase at an average of 10% per year globally.² As a direct consequence of this, the cost of providing employee health care benefits is also on the rise and, as demonstrated in our Latin American Employee Benefits Trends study, so is the importance of keeping these costs in check.

Percent of companies who report controlling health and welfare benefit costs as very or extremely important



In addition to the direct costs of providing health insurance, it's also important to consider the indirect costs of poor health. Even in the US, with extremely high healthcare costs, the total labor cost of employees' poor health is driven primarily by presenteeism,³ disability and absenteeism – these indirect costs of health represent more than twice the direct costs associated with health insurance.⁴



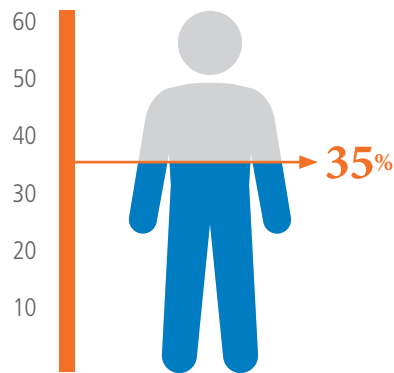
Given all of this, it's clear that there are many factors which impact health care costs. While health and wellness programs aren't a magic bullet, there is good evidence to suggest that wellness programming can certainly play a role in supporting this key business objective. In fact, studies have shown that companies with the most effective health and productivity programs have an average of 1.4% lower medical trend per year than competitors and 27% higher workforce productivity.⁵

Engaging staff

In a recent study, sponsored by MetLife and the MAXIS Global Benefit Network (GBN),⁶ we looked at employee perspectives on wellness resources across 11 countries, and found a positive association between employee satisfaction with health and wellness benefits and key business outcomes of work engagement and organizational commitment.⁷

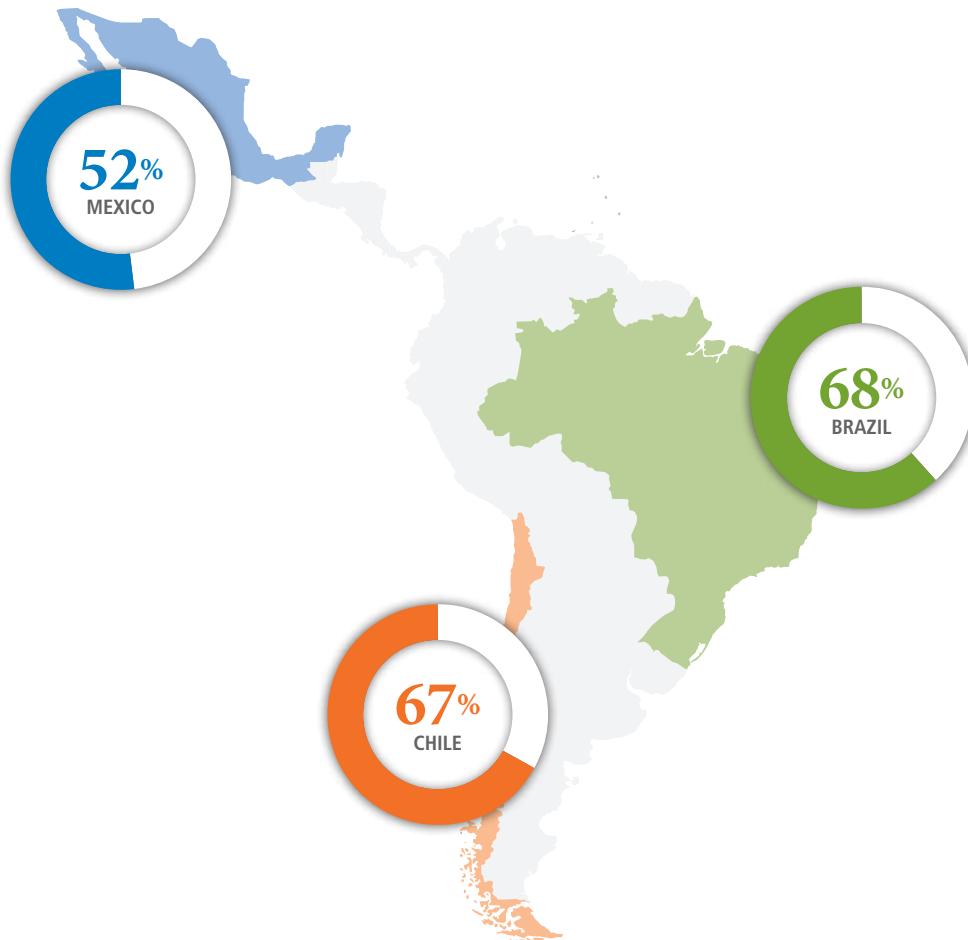
The report also noted that, while many employees attribute high importance to wellness, their satisfaction with wellness programming was low, particularly in developing countries like Mexico and Brazil.

Percent of employees who were moderately or strongly satisfied with employee sponsored health and wellness resources



But, it's not just employees that recognize the value of health and wellness programs; our Latin America Employee Benefits Trends study also showed that employers rate these programs highly.

Percent of employers who rated health and wellness programs to be extremely or very valuable



Turn insights into action

Research from a variety of sources suggests both employers and employees rate highly the value of wellness programs. Not only for the impact they can have on employee engagement and commitment, but also from the impact they can have on managing health care costs and improving productivity. So, perhaps the difficult part is not in recognizing that health and wellness programs are valuable, but rather, knowing where to start and understanding that programs don't need to be expensive or complex.



Keep it simple: If the cost of starting a program is holding you back, be assured that wellness programs don't need to be expensive. Think simple and consider things like:

- Encouraging employees to take the stairs rather than using the elevator.
- Start an office walking and / or running group. This will get people moving and also allow you to cater to a range of differing fitness levels.
- Provide fruit baskets in the office one or two days a week.
- Develop posters or email communications providing information on healthy eating habits or simple healthy recipes.



Educate and communicate: Test out different communication approaches and see what works and what people respond to. Make sure the communication goes both ways and you're encouraging input and feedback, which will allow you to continually develop and adapt your program.



Get the team on board: For these activities to make an impact, participation is key. Consider ways to promote your program and look at opportunities to incentivise participation where relevant – is there the opportunity for people to collect 'wellness' points for each activity they participate in, or for each new employee they bring on board to the program?



Knowledge is king: Tracking the success of your program is incredibly important. The better able you are to demonstrate the results of your wellness initiatives, the easier it will be to garner support from management to grow your program, and potentially grab a bigger slice of the budget!



Whatever you choose to do, the important thing to remember is something is better than nothing and starting with a small, basic wellness program means you can start to make positive changes today. Contact your account executive to learn more about how we can help you get your wellness program off the ground.



For more of the latest findings from MetLife's *Study of Employee Benefits Trends*, visit BenefitTrends.MetLife.com

Unless otherwise noted, statistics based on those responding to survey.

¹ World Health Organisation, *Spending on health a global overview, Fact sheet No 319, April 2012*

² Towers Watson *Global Medical Trends, 2011*

³ Presenteeism, when an employee goes to work despite a medical illness, preventing them from working to their full capacity.

⁴ "Health and Productivity as a Business Strategy: A Multi-Employer Study"; R. Loeppke et al; *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Vol, 51, No. 4: April 2009*

⁵ Towers Watson, *Business Issues, Improving Employee Health and Productivity, 2013*

⁶ MAXIS GBN is administered by AXA France Vie S.A., Paris France (AXA) and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, NY (MetLife) and is a network of locally licensed MAXIS Member insurance companies. MAXIS GBN is not an insurance provider and only the MAXIS Member insurance companies provide insurance

⁷ The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, "Employer-sponsored Health and Wellness Resources," *Global Workforce Study, Sept. 2013*

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