

COUNTY OF VENTURA

WELLNESS PROGRAM

Annual Report
FY 2008-09



Promoting Good Health to Help Manage Health Care Costs

County Executive Office . Human Resources Division

I. Program Background

Expenditures for health care in the United States have skyrocketed over the past decades. Much of the increased costs can be attributed to chronic diseases and conditions, which in many cases are lifestyle related. Employers are becoming more aware that unhealthy behaviors are adversely affecting the health and productivity of their employees and ultimately, their businesses' bottom line. Consequently, increasing numbers of U.S. employers are offering health promotion and disease management programs at the worksite.

In 1983, the County of Ventura experienced a 71% increase in medical claims. In response, the Board of Supervisors approved a Labor Management Committee recommendation to establish the County's Wellness Program as part of the solution to contain escalating health care costs. The Wellness Program began operation in 1985. Over the years, the Wellness Program has faced a variety of reductions including the elimination of the \$300 participation incentive and the countywide policy allowing 14 hours of work-release time for employee attendance. Despite program cutbacks, the Wellness Program has continued to be well received and highly utilized by County employees. The Wellness Program has continued to provide cost-effective, comprehensive programs with tremendous impact on the health and wellbeing of County employees and their families.

Since its inception, the Wellness Program has received recognition for improving employee health. In FY 08-09, the County of Ventura was recognized as one of "California's Healthiest Employers". The County of Ventura was among only four employers to receive the 2008 California Fit Business Gold Award. The California Fit Business Award is given annually by the California Task Force on Youth and Workplace Wellness to recognize business models that promote a healthier workplace. The County of Ventura was the only county to receive a 2007 California Fit Business Award. In 2006, the County of Ventura was one of eight employers to receive the California Fit Business Award. According to Senator Torlakson, the Task Force Chair, "Fit Business Award winners provide examples of employers who are setting the standard for California businesses to follow."

Previous awards won by the County Wellness Program include: C. Everett Koop National Health Award, "Best Overall Program in the Public Sector" Health Action Leadership Award, National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award, Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Commendation, National Association for Worksite Health Promotion Business and Industry Award and the Exemplary Public Worksite Health Promotion Program Award by the National Association of Public Worksite Health Promotion, in association with the Council of State Governments.

II. Program Design/Activities

The overall goal of the County's Wellness Program is to help control increases in medical costs. The primary objectives are as follows:

1. Provide education and resources to help employees identify and reduce health risks before serious health problems occur.
 2. Provide special follow-up and assistance to employees identified at highest risk for preventable illnesses and excessive medical costs.
 3. When health problems do exist, help employees better manage their condition and use health care services more wisely.
-

The primary way in which employees identify their own personal health risks is through the Personal Wellness Profile (PWP) Program. The PWP Program provides employees with a computerized health risk appraisal. It includes a comprehensive lifestyle assessment and physical measurements of blood pressure, body mass index, waist/hip ratio, total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides, glucose and total cholesterol/HDL ratio. Employees receive their results and set goals for personal change at a follow-up group seminar. All participants discovered with high-risk conditions receive prompt personal follow-up and referrals as appropriate.

Results from well-conducted randomized trials suggest that providing risk reduction counseling for high-risk employees within the context of a comprehensive program is a critical component of an effective worksite health promotion program. The Wellness Program offers Health Track, a cost-effective intervention aimed at those employees at highest risk. PWP participants identified with significant risk factors are invited to join Health Track. Participants are assigned a Health Track coach who teaches, assists, guides and supports them with difficult lifestyle changes and disease management. Health Track coaches are health professionals such as Registered Dietitians, Exercise Physiologists, Nurse Educators or Certified Diabetes Educators who provide individual consultation supplemented with phone contacts, e-mails, educational materials and resource referrals.

The Wellness Program also provides educational classes for employees with chronic illnesses to help them better manage their condition and to assist them in making wiser use of medical services. The Wellness Program especially focuses on diabetes management since the incidence of diabetes has been increasing at alarming rates nationwide. In FY 08-09, the Wellness Program offered a "Living Well with Diabetes" series with additional follow-up sessions provided throughout the year. Classes were offered on other chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, back pain, cholesterol, arthritis and depression.

The Wellness Program offers classes for all employees focusing on risk reduction topics such as nutrition, stress management, weight management, exercise and smoking cessation. With overweight and obesity being the leading modifiable risk factor for type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases, the Wellness Program continued providing lifestyle change weight loss series and support to employee organized weight loss contests in FY 08-09. The Wellness Program also continued to work in collaboration with the County's Employee Assistance and Work/Life Programs to offer the Balancing Work and Family, Prenatal, Parenting and Elder Care Support programs.

Efforts have continued to make the Wellness Program accessible to more employees. In FY 08-09, the Personal Wellness Profile Program and Health Track Program were extended to County employees and their spouses at 14 different work locations. The Wellness Program offered Yoga series at nine different worksites. Additionally, over 50 sessions of Wellness education were provided at outlying locations, including a Stress Management class offered in conjunction with the County's Employee Assistance Program at various HSA locations.

The Wellness Program has continued working to create an environment more supportive of healthy living. In FY 08-09, an Eat Well and Move More campaign was launched on the Wellness Program's website which employees and their spouses can access from work or home on the internet. The Move More section of the website provides resources to: "Add activity breaks to meetings; Take time to stretch at your desk; Use the stairs instead of the

elevator; Walk on breaks; Be active on your commute; Walk, Run or Workout at Lunch; and Choose a Gym.” For example, the website provides walking maps for several County work locations and includes a listing of health clubs throughout the County that offer special discounts for County employees and their families. The “Take the Stairs” Posters on the website now hang by the elevators in the Hall of Administration. The Eat Well section of the website provides resources for offering healthier foods at meeting, potlucks and special events, making healthier choices from the County vending machines, cafeteria and snack bars, setting up a healthy office snack corner and bringing in healthier meals and snacks whether packing from home or ordering out. The Eat Well section includes a pamphlet listing over 30 brand name products available at Government Center concessions and a poster listing items in the County vending machines that meet Wellness Program criteria for healthy snack choices. The website also includes a special Healthier Choice entrée discount card to encourage employees to purchase healthier meals at the Government Center cafeteria (Bistro 800).

III. Program Participation

Participation in the Wellness Program has remained strong as shown in Table 1. In FY 08-09, 760 participants completed the Personal Wellness Profile Program and 89 new participants joined the Health Track high-risk coaching program. Wellness Program classes were attended by approximately 3,742 participants and 427 class sessions were offered for a total of 4,884 training hours. Class training hours are defined as the total number of class hours attended by participants. Almost all of those training hours were attended on the employee’s own time, usually during their lunch hour. Employee interest in Wellness classes is actually much greater than reflected in program participation statistics. If calculations included employees who had signed up for classes, but were unable to attend, total class training hours would have been almost twice as high.

Table 1

Comparison of Wellness Program Participation 1995-2009				
Year	PWPs	Health Track	Class Sessions	Class Attendance
<i>1995-96</i>	529	70	152	1,533
<i>1996-97</i>	668	82	196	2,542
<i>1997-98</i>	636	90	198	2,335
<i>1998-99</i>	949	170	217	1,933
<i>1999-00</i>	879	143	290	2,808
<i>2000-01</i>	845	140	267	2,706
<i>2001-02</i>	856	146	282	2,881
<i>2002-03</i>	889	132	278	2,805
<i>2003-04</i>	892	145	280	2,746
<i>2004-05</i>	838	171	325	3,284
<i>2005-06</i>	725	160	301	2,700
<i>2006-07</i>	761	129	362	2,909
<i>2007-08</i>	749	106	372	3,295
<i>2008-09</i>	760	89	427	3,742

IV. Risks Identified and Reduced

The County Wellness Program has been extremely successful in identifying and reducing risk factors associated with today's leading causes of death, disability and medical expense. Table 2 summarizes the risks identified among those who joined the Personal Wellness Profile Program in FY 08-09. The Wellness Program referred 110 participants for elevated blood pressure follow-up and 102 participants were referred for elevated glucose levels. Only a small percentage of those identified with high risks were previously aware of their condition. For example, only 3% of the participants identified with elevated blood sugar reported a personal history of diabetes.

Table 2

Initial Status of Personal Wellness Profile Participants FY 2008-09	
Percentage	Factors
23% (169)	Had a family history of heart disease (before age 55).
61% (448)	Need more exercise.
42% (309)	Had cholesterol over recommended level.
5% (35)	Used tobacco.
66% (488)	Were over the recommended weight.
15% (110)	Had high blood pressure.
31% (229)	Had a significant stress sign present.
68% (499)	Had a poor nutritional score.
14% (102)	Had diabetes/high blood sugar.
38% (279)	Had a moderate to high coronary risk.

Table 3 displays results reported by Wellness Profile participants one year after entering the program. Health Track participants reported even greater lifestyle changes. For example 88% of Health Track Participants reported reduced fat intake and 100% reported increased fruit and vegetable intake.

A comparison of actual clinical test results of FY 08-09 participants with their prior year results, confirm participants have significantly reduced their health risks and maintained those reductions over an extended period of time. The FY 07-08 to FY 08-09 comparison showed:

- 45% of those with high cholesterol reduced their cholesterol below the high risk range.
 - 50% of those with high blood pressure lowered their blood pressure to normal levels.
 - 36% of those with elevated glucose levels lowered their glucose to below the pre-diabetic level.
-

Table 3

Wellness Profile 12 Month Follow-up Self-Reported Individual Progress Data – FY 2008-2009		
How have you done in the following areas?	Yes	No
1. Have you increased your physical activity?	69% (135)	31% (60)
2. If you were overweight, have you lost weight?	55% (68)	45% (56)
3. Are you drinking less alcohol (including beer and wine)?	46% (40)	54% (47)
4. Have you reduced or quit smoking?	70% (7)	30% (3)
5. Have you reduced your intake of fat?	66% (120)	34% (62)
6. Have you increased your intake of whole grains, fruit and vegetables?	80% (148)	20% (38)
7. Have you reduced your intake of sodium?	56% (92)	44% (71)
8. Are you managing stress more effectively?	74% (126)	26% (170)

V. Medical Savings

A number of health risks have been shown to be associated with higher medical claims. Presence of multiple combinations of risk factors provides a better prediction of future claims experience than any single factor. An analysis of the initial risk factor combinations of County Wellness participants conducted by Wellsource, an industry leader in Health Assessment and Prevention Systems, is shown in Table 4. From this analysis, Wellsource calculated the average preventable cost per County Wellness participant is \$4,734 per year. Since it is unlikely all risks would actually be reduced, Wellsource estimated a more conservative or achievable preventable cost per participant of \$2,049 per year. Applying this more conservative estimate just to those who participated in the Personal Wellness Profile Program this past year, the County could potentially avoid \$1,506,328 per year in unnecessary medical costs. Factoring just this conservative cost saving estimate alone with the Wellness Program FY 08-09 budget, these savings translate into over a \$3 return on every dollar invested in the Wellness Program. These savings are within the range reported by other worksite health promotion programs with similar program components.

Table 4

Medical Claims Evaluation Initial Risk Factor Combinations – FY 2008-09	
Number of Risk Factors	Percent of People
0 Risk Factors	19.5% (143)
1 Risk Factor	26.4% (194)
2 to 3 Risk Factors	34.3% (252)
4 to 5 Risk Factors	14.7% (108)
6 or more Risk Factors	5.2% (38)

VI. Participant Satisfaction

At the end of each program, participants complete evaluation forms. Participants consistently give the highest ratings possible for Wellness programs offered. On the evaluation forms, many participants express their appreciation for the increased awareness, improvements in health status, and overall improvement in quality of life. Following are sample comments from participants in FY 08-09.

"The Wellness Program identified diabetes, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome... almost 2 years ago. Through meetings with counselors and classes to teach me about health and wellness I no longer have diabetes or high blood pressure. Your program saved my life! Thank You."

"When they took my blood pressure, it was very high. I was advised to call my doctor. I had an appointment with my doctor that same day and he prescribed medication. I thank God because looking back...I could of had a stroke."

"I think that it has helped a lot with my physical health. I have developed carpel tunnel in my hands & the yoga helps a lot with the symptoms & decreases the pain."

"Very helpful in alerting me to high blood sugar after taking blood test and meeting with nutritionist has enabled me to change my diet and bring level back to normal."

"I lost twenty pounds during the ten week program and significantly lowered my blood pressure. I am also borderline diabetic and believe that my doctor will see significant improvement when I have follow-up testing done in June."

"The Wellness Program identified the fact I was pre-diabetic 4 years ago. Through their help I was able to make diet adjustments and have lost 65 pounds. I no longer have abnormal blood work or pre-diabetes."

"I consider this program one of the best benefits of working at the County"

See Attachment "A" for a more complete list of participants' comments from FY 08-09.
--

VII. Conclusion

Preventable illness makes up a large portion of the nation's health care costs. A growing number of scientific studies have established the ability of worksite health promotion programs to decrease health care costs. From 1980 to 1991, 24 published studies evaluating worksite health promotion were reported in the New England Journal of Medicine. All 24 indicated positive health benefits and every study that analyzed for cost benefits demonstrated a positive effect. Since that time, more than 100 additional studies have been reviewed and again demonstrated positive outcomes. Increasingly, the evidence supporting the cost-effectiveness of comprehensive health promotion programs is becoming more compelling.

The County's health plans will spend millions of dollars this year to treat the illnesses of employees and their families. For only a tiny fraction of what the County will spend on treatment, the Wellness Program provides an important investment in prevention. It makes

more sense and cents to pay the small cost for an employee to attend a cholesterol education program instead of the high fees associated with bypass surgery or stroke recovery; or to provide employees with education on breast self-examination and mammography instead of paying the costs involved with mastectomy, chemotherapy, etc., or to pay the small price for prenatal education instead of the tragic costs of a low birth weight baby.

The results of the County's Wellness Program to date and the individual testimonies received from participants guarantee the Wellness Program will benefit the well-being of County employees and have a significant impact on medical costs not only this year, but well into the future.



Attachment "A"
Sample of Comments from Wellness Participants
Fiscal Year 2008-2009

"The Wellness Program identified diabetes, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome... almost 2 years ago. Through meetings with counselors and classes to teach me about health and wellness I no longer have diabetes or high blood pressure. Your program saved my life! Thank You."

"I consider this program one of the best benefits of working at the County."

"Very helpful in alerting me to high blood sugar after taking blood test and meeting with nutritionist has enabled me to change my diet and bring level back to normal."

"The information I've received from the classes I've attended has helped me to improve my diet and that of my family. I also exercise more now and enjoy it. I also share the information from the class with friends and family which helps to educate them on more healthy life styles."

"This is information that is directly applicable in our lives and can be useful in helping lower our insurance costs."

"I have started meeting with a wellness coach and am on my way to reversing my diabetes."

"Since I've been doing yoga through the wellness program, I've noticed that I experience less stress at work and have less tension in my neck and shoulders, which reduces the number of migraines I have."

"The wellness program has provided great opportunities for self help and improved my health 100 fold. Yoga is my favorite class and has given me much relief with my neck and hip problems as well as learning how to relax and breathe. Thank you so much. I also love the cooking classes, I've learned such great healthy ingredients and how to best prepare them. Thank you again."

"Better flexibility, lower stress; eliminates back pain. Much appreciated!"

"Helped me lose weight and maintain weight loss, and get my blood pressure and cholesterol under control."

"I have started back to exercise daily, and I have changed my eating habits. I recently had my blood drawn and my cholesterol has reduced significantly."

"I was diagnosed with Type II diabetes almost ten years ago, had appointments and discussions with Doctors and Registered Dietitians, but I learned more during the Wednesday classes and the follow up appointment with [a health coach], these gave me a better understanding of diabetes and how to control my blood sugar. I am expecting a lower A1C on my next lab results. My wife and I will for sure sign up again in your other Wellness Classes. Thanks to you all!"

"My blood sugar readings have improved utilizing the information from Wellness Program classes."

"I love that the County worries about the well being of its employees and it is wonderful to have exercise and education be part of work. Taking a 20-30 minute walk halfway through the work day really re-energizes me and allows me to work more efficiently and productive."

“Wellness personnel have helped me to lose weight, has kept me abreast of new ideas and ways to keep myself healthy. I try to go to as many Wellness seminars as I can and that apply to me. I especially like the annual Wellness Profile. It's very important to me.”

“Attending the various classes keeps me aware of what's good for me and reminds me frequently of what I need to do to improve my health and or deal with my health problems, like my high blood pressure. Thank you!!!!!!!!!!!!”

“I really like the signs in the government center that say each day has 1,440 minutes use 30 of them for exercise. That is a powerful statement, and really puts things in perspective, and in turn makes it easier to find the time. The parenting classes in the past were great for myself and my family (my kids are grown now) -- helped relieve stress levels. Attending the yoga at work helped jump start additional positive steps in my life regarding health.”

“The Wellness Profile program has opened my eyes to a potential problem and has made me aware of it so that I can work on making it better.”

“Taking the Wellness Program (Yoga class) made me realize that my employer does care about my health and well being! Also made me realize how important the need to "de-stress" while at work is. The yoga "aurora" last thru the rest on the day into the following day! Thank you!”

“Since my wellness program, I have managed to lose fifteen pounds and have been able to keep them off. I am also more active, taking fifteen minutes walks during my breaks, and try to use my treadmill more often in the early mornings. Thank you!”

“I have taken a variety of classes, especially the ones that have to do with weight loss, fitness, nutrition and health. Besides my physical health I also need support and assistance with my family life. As a single parent with two children I sometimes feel overwhelmed. In a class like this one and Positive Parenting, I get to hear from other parents (that may be in my same situation) and suggestions that might help. The Wellness program has definitely helped improve the way I eat, I try to make healthier choices. I'm still working on changing my lifestyle to improve my overall health.”

“I had been avoiding carbs and had not eaten fruit in about over one year. During this program, I incorporated fruit back into my diet and learned the importance of complex carbs. In addition, I increased my exercise, vegetables, and water intake. I feel like I have more energy than ever. Instructor is excellent! Keep the program going.”

“Raising awareness of critical health issues and ways to prevent worsening of health conditions; the Wellness Program has specifically helped me to control high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol levels.”

“Everyday life has some ups and downs, and yoga really helps to calm down, especially the breathing.”

“The Wellness Profile helps me watch my cholesterol. Yoga keeps my back from hurting.”

“I lost over 15 pounds. My blood pressure at drugstore is consistently about 104/64 to 110/70. I wear a size smaller pants, had to but a new belt. I never feel starved. I am very near my weight goal. I am exercising every day, and have a lot more energy at work. Several people have noticed and complimented me on my weight.”

“The stretch/yoga class maintains flexibility, preventing back injuries. It also reduces stress, improving health.”

“I am walking regularly with a partner 3-4 times per week and find that just this change has helped me to feel better, sleep better, function better.”

“I have learned how to keep my goals and stick to them. Better informed on making healthier choices for myself and family. I have gained some wonderful knowledge! :) Thank you so much for offering such wonderful classes.”

“I lost twenty pounds during the ten week program and significantly lowered my blood pressure. I am also borderline diabetic and believe that my doctor will see significant improvement when I have follow-up testing done in June.”

“Wellness has helped me shift my focus to my health and the power I have as an individual to make healthy differences that make my life better. I cannot stress enough that this program is the catalyst for change and awareness.”

“I lost 10 pounds. I have more to lose, and I plan to take the class again as I know that participating in a structured program works better for me than trying to go it alone from a book.”

“Weekly yoga class is excellent exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle for a busy County employee.”

“I lost four pounds while taking the course. For some people that may not sound like an accomplishment but for me it is. I have started walking for 45 minutes a day instead of 30 since taking the class.”

“I don't have time to research the information covered by these seminars. It's a huge benefit to have access to these experts who can deliver this kind of information in a succinct fashion that is easily accessible.”

“Very helpful in alerting me to high blood sugar after taking blood test and meeting with nutritionist has enabled me to change my diet and bring level back to normal.”

“Wellness program gave me the tools on how to improve my health and my family health thru the classes I attended about food, cholesterol, etc. It also gave the tools on how to deal with children thru the parental classes. I think the wellness program is an excellent program to improve over all employees' life. It is great.”

“I've learned how to be a better parent, how to cook healthy meals, and how to take better care of my own health. What more is there to say? It's an awesome program and I feel thankful to have access to it.”

“It has made me change my eating habits, now I eat healthier. I also joined a gym and walk 2 miles a day.”

“Yoga works! You feel better on the job.”

“Stretching and relaxation techniques have helped with neck and shoulder pain incurred while sitting for long periods at my desk.”

“Empowers me to continue healthy habits that promote my work productivity and personal well-being.”

“I've attended fitness and cooking classes over few years. There have been many new beneficial things introduced to me to improve my family's life style. These finding are very helpful considering my schedule of full-time working professional and full-time mother of two elementary school children. I found it harder to balance until I started discovering new ways to accomplish it, and these new ways were introduced to me by the wellness program. THANKS and KEEP UP A GOOD WORK.”

"I have lost 10 pounds and maintained this weight for a year."

"The Wellness program has helped me to maintain a healthier lifestyle."

"I am now sharing the class info with my whole family and are now eating well and walking faithfully. We have a biggest loser challenge going on at home."

"The stretching we do helps me loosen up after sitting for long periods. I now do these stretches periodically on my own."

"It has helped me feel less stress and also simple exercises I can do for my problem areas especially when we work sitting down most of the day."

"I am much more aware of the foods I eat now and am trying to improve my diet overall each day. I am truly more aware of the need for fruits and vegetables and am actually eating them more."

"I have changed my diet, these classes have given me new ideas and I have lost 6 pounds so far :)"

"I have focused on my health and making "lifestyle" changes for the past year. The Wellness Program is helping me daily to stay on track. Every breath, every step, every bite of food makes a difference. I know that if I need guidance, or if I have questions guidance from professionals is just a phone call or a few steps away. That's important to me."

"I have stopped to look at labels and look at the sugars and sodium as well as the fat content. Hoping to avoid getting diabetes that many of my family members have died of!!"

"When I can attend, I return to work refreshed and relaxed."

"It helps to know that the County cares about its staff. Yoga is one of my favorite programs because it forces me to do exercise which I normally won't do at home. My mind is much clearer and relaxed after the class. I feel good."

"Love the Friday Yoga class. Everybody should take it-there'd be a lot less injuries."

"The fact that it is available; not all employers provide this. It's a Gr8 asset to any business; Private or Government giving the employees a supportive environment to obtain the information that is beneficial in "Preventative Human Maintenance & Health". Thank you for providing the Wellness Program & allowing us to provide feedback!"

"This was my second class. The first class got me motivated...started going to the gym again and eating less than 2000 cal a day and within one week just changing my diet and going to the gym every day I lost 8 lbs!!!"

"I've always wanted to try yoga. The convenience of the wellness program gave me the chance to try yoga much sooner than I otherwise would have (if ever). I plan on continuing to take advantage of yoga classes provided through the Wellness Program and expect the combination of stretching, strength building, meditation/relaxation to improve health, concentration, and focus while reducing stress."

"Helps me to relax and return to back to work with no stress."

"I have realized my weight problem is a bigger problem than just food and I have learned that eating healthy can be very tasty."

“I have benefited greatly from my participation in the Wellness Program. I have been seeing [my health coach] regularly and she has helped me discover things about me that I never acknowledged before. And now, after having attended the cooking class, I am aware of good tasting alternatives to the usual fare that I always prepare. I'm in the mood and mind frame for new adventures in food and the Wellness Program has been helpful in getting me there. Thank you so much!!! I want you to know that I talk it up to whoever will listen and encourage employees all the time to check it out and get involved.”

“My Wellness Profile alerted me to the fact I was diabetic. Classes help me to improve exercising and cooking healthy.”

“I had never tried yoga. I always thought it would be too difficult, too hard to stretch, etc. I couldn't be more happy now that I've tried it. The level of the class is completely appropriate for me, a 40 something person. What I'm getting out of it is great. I am stretching and using different muscle groups and am sometimes a little sore the next day, but I think the bigger thing I get out of it is a type of relaxing feeling that I've never experienced before. I've asked a few others about their experience in the class, and everyone else I've spoken to expressed a similar relaxation experience. The class helps reduce work place stress and restores my ability to concentrate and focus, calmly on my job. Best class I've ever taken through the County!”

“The Wellness Program has improved my health by the annual Wellness Profile and seminar, and the Wellness classes I take. The information I learned from the seminars and classes has been very valuable and has helped me to live a more healthy life.”

“I hated vegetables since I was a kid. I never consumed so much vegetables in my life. I guess I ate the amount for 45 years vegetables in the past 3 years.”

“It has been two weeks and I already feel better. I've made a few small changes. I have set a goal to improve my exercise and diet. I will see the results on my next Wellness Profile next year. This is not a diet; it is a lifestyle change...forever.”

“I have incorporated the Wellness program as an indicator of my overall health and use it to monitor my annual progress towards greater wellness. It is something I look forward to and something I use to consciously to help motivate me into making changes to improve my health and well-being. It has helped me focus on my health and health goals.”

“My nutrition awareness has increased dramatically. My entire family benefits from what I have learned as we ALL have made changes toward a more healthy lifestyle. Also, my physician commented that the Wellness Profile is an excellent evaluation tool for her patients to use, and is very glad that it is available to us, so thank you!!!”

“Many people don't have time to set up an appointment to just see where they are health wise. Having this program here will promote health. I wouldn't have gone and wasted a vacation day to do this, but having this here and only took 5 mins - totally worth it!”

“I was able to lower my cholesterol by changing my eating habits and increase exercise.”

“It's a very easy way to gauge your health. The information is valuable, and you make it easy by allowing me to go to employee health in the Hall of Administration to get this done instead of taking time off-campus to see a doctor.”

Immediately afterward, and for the rest of the day, I feel centered, relaxed (not sleepy), calm, able to more clearly focus and communicate with others, and have a good overall peaceful feeling. It has made

my Friday afternoon workdays my favorite time to work because I can get so much more done, more concisely and without feeling distracted, or anxious. The class helps reduce work place stress and restores my ability to concentrate and focus, calmly while I work.”

“Opportunity to commit to and give expression to a healthy choice along with/in front of workmates is great for accountability to the exercising itself but also is great for general team building.”

“It discovered problems I didn't know I had and helped me correct them with the help of my Doctor.”

“I was able to do the Wellness Program 3 years in a row and then met with [a health coach]. She helped me identify I had Metabolic syndrome and gave me suggestions for changing my diet. I have lost 65 pounds in the past 4 years with those suggestions.”

“It's easy to let things slide between yearly checkups at the doctor's office. The Wellness Program helps keep me motivated. I can catch potential problems faster, too. Also, the classes and individual counseling have been invaluable.”

“It helps me to clear my thoughts and return to work more energized.”

“Well I am a borderline diabetic and because yoga has been available to me through work I am able to keep doing it there by actually making me lose weight. Thereby, being less at risk of becoming diabetic and for that I am eternally thankful to the County of Ventura!!!”

“The first screening I was not doing good. I did not know how unhealthy I was. I took the recommendations onboard. My next screening was better thanks to the recommendations. This is my third year and I'm happy to say my health continues to improve.”

“I was inspired to work on the areas that were lacking (i.e. exercise) and continue other healthy lifestyle habits I was already doing.”

“Years ago my blood levels were high and bad and I was contacted by a rep and then over the years I have made changes in diet & exercise and was able to see for myself those levels come down into a good range and so a person can track those kinds of things themselves from year to year.”

“I love this class. I wish more people would try it. There would be significantly fewer back problems. The class is taught in a "non-spiritual" manner which wouldn't cause anyone problems with their own belief system. I know that this is a concern that some people have with yoga.”

“Exercises learned are very useful at home as well as when we are here at work to function better and be more productive...”

“We have had the privilege to have a Wellness instructor do a couple of talks for our staff and she always has helpful tips and information to improve health and lifestyle.”

“I have a family history of high cholesterol and being able to keep track of what my cholesterol is allows me to adjust my current life style to ensure that I am staying healthy”.

“The Wellness Program has given me a better understanding overall of health in general and specific needs to improve and/or maintain a healthy lifestyle. I have made a greater effort to improve my health by exercising more regularly, eating more nutritious foods, and managing stress.”

“I have benefited from the whole thing from the weight & b/p check, blood draw and then seeing the results on paper and being able to attend the class afterwards and being able to answer questions if we need to. The whole package is good.”

“Yoga helps reduce stress and increase flexibility, balance and strength. I especially appreciate that it's accessible to all levels of ability. Thank you!”

“It is a huge stress reliever! I look forward to it every week!”

“The step by step briefing on the Wellness Profile report and having a very knowledgeable Dietician was very important. She was able to answer all of our questions and provided some excellent advice.”

“Last year I found I may be pre-diabetic and was able to take steps to improve and abate diagnosis of diabetes.”

“Employees that don't participate are missing a great benefit and an opportunity to keep healthcare costs lower for all employees.”

“The Wellness Program identified the fact I was pre-diabetic 4 years ago. Through their help I was able to make diet adjustments and have lost 65 pounds. I no longer have abnormal blood work or pre-diabetes.”
