CCA Releases “Rand Report on Workplace Wellness: What Employers Must Know”

Rand Corp Report's Finding Point to Need for Better Metrics, More Data to Show Value of Wellness Programs

Washington, D.C. (PRWEB) June 27, 2013 -- The Care Continuum Alliance, the voice of the population health and wellness industry, today released a review of the of the Rand Corp Workplace Wellness Programs Study, presented to Congress, with a focus on the most important issues for the industry and employers in particular. The “Rand Report on Workplace Wellness: What Employers Must Know,” reiterates the study's call for further research, better metrics and more data to showcase the value of wellness programs.

The Rand Corp's report, mandated by the US Congress, was developed for the U.S. Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services. The “Rand Report on Workplace Wellness: What Employers Must Know” goes into detailed responses to the most salient issues, including those addressed by media reports.

CCA owns a database on wellness programs and incentives from several current and former CCA member companies and their clients, which was used by RAND Corp in the preparation of the report.

“This country is facing a growing epidemic of preventable diseases such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes that are having an impact on our Nation’s medical costs and workforce productivity.” said Fred Goldstein, CCA Interim Executive Director. “We must continue to seek out programs and services that slow down or reverse these trends.”

“We recognize that this is just one report in a small but growing body of literature. Other studies have demonstrated stronger positive results. More research is needed and more innovation is required to understand and solve this problem,” said Goldstein.

CCA leadership and its members' participation in the research that underpins the Rand Corp report attest to the organization's commitment to rigor and evidence-based programs that we know can improve the health of participants in the short term, and the health of the nation in the long term.

The report includes data from over five years from seven employers with over 1.7 million eligible employees between the ages of 18 and 64. Most of the employers are large-scale, however one had 15,000 employees. The database includes: eligibility and medical claims (including pharmacy); health risk assessment data for over 200,000 unique individuals; and wellness/disease management program participation data for over 43,000 unique individuals.

“Perhaps the most important conclusion is the need for more research,” said Goldstein. “This study shows statistically significant and clinically meaningful effects on health risks and approximate cost neutrality for wellness programs. The industry has changed considerably over the last few years, since the data used in this study was compiled. There is greater use of technology, new approaches to improve engagement, and more robust measurements coupled with the understanding that we must create a culture of health.”

Wellness programs add value as an important component of an organization's entire culture of health, but they
are just one component. CCA encourages discussion around the value on investment, as opposed to a singular focus on return on investment that looks at just the medical claims costs.

“The value on investment of wellness programs transcends the traditional notion of what those programs are,” said Karen Moseley, CCA Director of Research and Quality. “Value considers input from other sources such as employee morale, and productivity. Our current work with HERO to create a core set of metrics for employers considers this integration of clinical data with the other elements.”

“Even when these programs are found to be cost-neutral, couldn't we say it is a win-win for employer and employee to provide tools that result in a healthier workforce…not to say anything about the long term benefit to the Nation's health,” said Moseley.

CCA and member research shows that:

- Obesity and tobacco use lead to increased health care expenditures. Wellness programs around obesity and tobacco use incorporating financial incentives demonstrate significant health improvement and cost-savings.

- Wellness programs can lower cost trends through health improvement without being discriminatory.

- Appropriate incentive and wellness program design can produce cost savings for employers without placing a greater burden on employees from lower socioeconomic strata who often have the most health risks.

- Wellness programs, as one component of an organizational culture of health, can produce additional positive outcomes, aside from cost savings.

Over the years, CCA has done considerable research, in partnership with members, regarding the use of incentives. Last October, it released a comprehensive report, Participant Engagement and the Use of Incentives, and in late January sent formal comments to the Department of Health and Human Services on the proposed rule discussing Incentives for Nondiscriminatory Wellness Programs in Group Health Plans.

CCA and the Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) are working on the impending release of a set of core metrics for employers to evaluate the impact of the programs they offer. This effort responds to repeated requests from employers for standardization in this area.

This important endeavor is just another statement example of CCA and its members' interest and demand for more research around the impact and successful implementation of population health management programs. This is consistent with the overarching conclusion of the Rand Corp report which finds supportive evidence of clear and meaningful effects for program impact on health risks and other areas, and specifically suggests the need for more research overall.

Read Rand Report on Workplace Wellness: What Employers Must Know Part I

Read Rand Report on Workplace Wellness: What Employers Must Know Part II

About the Care Continuum Alliance
The Care Continuum Alliance represents more than 150 organizations and individuals and aligns all stakeholders on the care continuum toward improving population health. Through advocacy, research and education, the Care Continuum Alliance advances strategies to improve care quality and outcomes and reduce preventable costs for the well and those with and at risk of chronic conditions. Learn more at www.carecontinuumalliance.org
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