



# Workplace Health Screenings

2014 Prevention Campaign Fact Sheet



*Vision of the [National Prevention Strategy](#): Working together to improve the health and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities by moving the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness.*

## **WHAT IS A SCREENING?**

A screening is a medical assessment to detect diseases or serious health conditions. In the past, patients were treated when they became sick. Now we know early detection can make health problems easier to treat and cure. Screenings improve lives, save lives, and also save money!

## **BUSINESS CASE FOR SCREENINGS**

Screenings are critical to individual employees and to agencies' health promotion efforts. A screening can save an employee's life. For agencies, collectively assessing your workforce's screening data can help you to strategically design a worksite health and wellness program that addresses the most prominent health risk factors in your workforce; this makes screenings an essential element of realizing positive impacts on health care costs, productivity, reduced absenteeism, recruitment, retention, culture, and employee morale. Even more broadly, agencies, employees, their families, and communities all benefit from the prevention of disease.

According to the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), administering an assessment to define employee health risks and concerns and to describe current health promotion activities, capacity and needs is the first step in the systematic process of building a successful workplace health and wellness program. Information from assessments will inform determining goals, selecting priority interventions, building an organizational infrastructure, implementing programs, and evaluating health promotion efforts.

## **HEALTH RISK APPRAISALS & BIOMETRIC TESTINGS**

One way to gather information needed to plan, implement, and evaluate worksite health and wellness programs is through a **health risk appraisal (HRA)**. The [2004 National Worksite Health Promotion Survey](#) found that 45.8% of worksites with more than 750 employees conducted HRAs. An HRA is a screening tool that identifies demographic, medical and lifestyle information and quantifies a participant's health compared to public health standards or good health recommendations.

Another common screening for workplaces is **biometric testing**. The purpose of biometric testing in worksite health promotion programs is to screen for potential medical concerns rather than diagnosis or treatment of a medical condition. Biometric testing includes measurements for blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity (BMI). These screenings are sometimes done in on-site health centers, in partnership with health plans, or in primary care clinics.

**All Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) plans cover HRAs, biometric testing, and preventative care.**

It is preferable for agencies to link both HRAs and biometric testing with medical care delivery as necessary (either on-site or through the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) services) to assure follow-up and appropriate treatment.

**EXAMPLES OF HRA & BIOMETRIC TESTING BENEFITS INCLUDE\*:**

- Providing the ability to aggregate data by organizational division and risk prevalence to inform wellness program planning, benefits design, monitoring of trends and evaluation
- Helping an employer build a culture of health
- Serving as the core of a systematic approach to organizing preventive health information
- Creating or reinforcing awareness of personal risk factors for chronic disease and injury, a necessary first step to lowering risks
- Empowering the individual with information about “do-able” actions
- Setting goals for lifestyle changes or obtaining preventive health services
- Linking participants with other health-related services sponsored by the employer
- Monitoring progress toward health-related goal accomplishments

(\*Adapted from [the National Business Group on Health & CDC’s Health Risk Appraisals at the Worksite](#), 2006.)

**RESOURCES & GUIDANCE FOR WORKSITE HEALTH & WELLNESS COORDINATORS**

[U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s Health & Wellness Federal Tools & Resources Page](#)

From Governmentwide guidelines to sample resources and information on Federal agencies that play a key role in worksite health & wellness, many tools and resources are available on this website to help understand the basics of worksite health & wellness, explore issues in greater detail, and implement effective programs.

[CDC Workplace Health Promotion Employee Healthy Surveys](#)

This site provides suggestions for the design, delivery, and assessment of employee health surveys.

[CDC Healthier Worksite Initiative Health Risk Appraisals](#)

CDC Healthier Worksite Initiative has developed guidance and considerations for the use of Health Risk Appraisals in the workplace. This site includes considerations for use, the purpose of HRAs, identifying what your workplace wants from an HRA, important implementation aspects (ethics, technical features, mode of administration, use of incentives and more), and a checklist for planning HRA implementation.

[The National Business Group on Health & CDC’s Health Risk Appraisals at the Worksite Guide](#)

This guide provides information to help employers make informed decisions about if, why, when, and how to use HRAs for their workforce. It includes an overview of HRAs, an HRA features prioritization checklist, and an HRA comparison checklist.

[Veterans Health Administration’s Employee Health Promotion Disease Prevention \(EHPDP\) Guidebook](#)

This guidebook was written by a multidisciplinary task group to provide information and references appropriate for establishing and expanding EHPDP programs within the VHA. This guidebook is available as an example of an agency-level guidebook and provides templates, sample documents, references, and directives for use and modification by other Federal agencies.