

It's no surprise that workers who struggle to stay healthy and fit can cost employers in many ways, from missed time to lowered productivity.

That's why many companies are launching wellness programs designed to boost their staffs health and morale, and by extension their own bottom line.

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Dr. Tim Vega, OSF HealthCare Employee Health Services

"Multiple studies in multiple industries show savings. At minimum a good program will save three dollars for every dollar you are spending. And that's just health care savings. That doesn't include the savings from reversed absenteeism, or turnover rate, which is usually triple than what you save on health care dollars."

At OSF HealthCare, its employees, or Mission Partners, have the opportunity to participate in OSF 4Life. OSF 4Life is a comprehensive wellness program for Mission Partners. It gives employees access to expert exercise trainers and nutritionists as well as resources such as a health library, wellness workshops, smoking cessation courses and sleep issue resolutions.

While they can take many forms, these efforts often start with simple goals. According to Vega, starting small could help employees make big strides.

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"If we can just focus on a few things – on motion, nutrition – and it doesn't necessarily mean losing weight. It just means motion and nutrition. Good sleep – even if we just focus on those three things, integrating that with our health care system, that will go a long way toward making it sustainable for people who are retiring, and their kids, and their kids."

Employee performance also gets a boost from a healthier staff. Vega says a work environment that empowers employees with resources and support will improve the overall morale.

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"The real gem here is that you have a better engaged employee, a happier employee, and we're a service industry, so we want a happy Mission Partner serving our patients and for us that is really the key. We want service to be second to none. We need our people to be performing second to none."