



FEATURED CONTRIBUTOR

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# 2019 Partner Update

## FEATURED TOPIC

## A CULTURE OF WHOLE-PERSON WELLNESS

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WORKPARTNERSOHS.COM

## A Culture of Whole-Person Wellness

By Mark "RxProfessor" Pew

Deciding to have a wellness program in a workplace is more about doing than talking. Most parents have noticed their children typically pay more attention to (and mimic) what they do than what they say. Wellness programs are often implemented in a workplace, with good intentions, using a "build it and they will come" attitude. But sometimes they don't "come" even though it was built. Or the small number of participants are those already physically, psychologically and emotionally fit (the famous 80/20 rule). All of which can create questions about, and lower long-term commitment to, the value of a wellness program. Given that return on investment is often subjective (are increases in productivity or decreases in work injuries a function of the wellness program, workplace safety programs, efficiencies through automation, a decline in business / employees, or any number of other disparate variables), how can a wellness program be impactful?

The primary key is creating a culture of wellness, modeled by management and infused into every inch of the business. But it's not just physical wellness as often is the focus. It's whole-person wellness – mind, body, soul. Every aspect of the human experience.

For modeling, that means management – from the C-Suite to middle management to supervisors – need to embrace whole-person wellness as part of their lifestyle at home and work.

- Telling someone that does heavy lifting in a warehouse to lose weight does not resonate from someone who is morbidly obese themselves.
- Telling someone to eat more nutritiously while the messenger is eating a candy bar for that afternoon pick-me-up likely won't have an impact.
- Telling someone to get up out of their chair for five minutes each hour and move around isn't very impactful from someone that only leaves their desk for lunch and to go home.
- Telling someone to drink two liters of water every day doesn't make sense when the speaker has just finished their third cup of coffee.
- Telling someone to establish work / life balance will not be motivated by someone that works on weekends and does not take any vacation time.
- Telling someone to "get over it and get back to work" because of a relationship breakup will backfire if they're being told that by someone who is an emotional wreck because of issues at home they refuse to address.

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### WorkPartners Wellness Box

The exercises in the WorkPartners Wellness Box are ones that strengthen and stretch muscle groups that are often involved in repetitive use injuries. Using the Wellness Box, employees will decrease the likelihood of a repetitive injury. [Email Us](#) for details.



### Schedule a Clinic Tour

WorkPartners has extensive experience helping San Diego County employers reduce injuries, lower costs, and promote a safe workplace. [Email Us](#).

- Telling someone their absenteeism is unacceptable when their supervisor is rarely in the office before 11am on Monday and takes two-hour lunch breaks to play golf will be ignored.

You get the picture at this point.

Infusing whole-person wellness throughout the company is another key component to establishing an uplifting culture.

- Change vending machines to include healthy snacks alongside – or maybe to replace – candy. Install water refilling stations and encourage the use of reusable bottles and cups.
- Equip some of the more sedentary jobs with standing desks. Hold lunch 'n learn breaks with a nutritionist to teach employees how to cook healthier at home.
- Advertise access to the employee assistance program (EAP) and remove any stigma associated with using it as a resource.
- Set aside a telehealth room for proactive treatment of health issues including pain management while encouraging annual physicals.
- Create an “elevator free” day every month where everyone that physically can uses the stairs instead.



- Pay for smoking cessation programs and provide incentives to remain abstinent.
- Use wearable devices to instill team competition on number of steps or weight loss.
- Train managers to identify psychosocial red flags and empower them with resources to help.
- Convert “happy hours” from drinking alcohol to fun, sober activities.

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**“Most people will respond better to other people that are actually modeling the desired behavior. Leaders establish the culture of their workplace (or their family) by what they do, not what they say. Or programs they install.”**

Mark “RxProfessor” Pew

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Educator and Agitator

## ABOUT MARK PEW

Mark Pew, senior vice president of product development and marketing for Preferred Medical, is a passionate educator and agitator. Known as the RxProfessor, Mark is focused on the intersection of chronic pain and appropriate treatment, particularly as it relates to the clinical and financial implications of opioids, benzodiazepines and other prescription painkillers, non-pharma treatment modalities and the evolution of medical marijuana. He is a strong champion for the workers' compensation industry to #PreventTheMess and #CleanUpTheMess, movements he created to drive attention to the importance of individualized appropriate treatment for injured workers. Mark is a vocal advocate of the BioPsychoSocialSpiritual treatment model that focuses on the whole person.

With more than 35 years of experience in property and casualty, healthcare and technology, Mark has been the mastermind behind solutions that transform the way the workers' compensation industry navigates utilization management and treatment, particularly in the area of opioids and other potentially high-risk medications.

Mark is a popular speaker at workers' compensation, insurance, legal and healthcare conferences around the country and frequently provides continuing education sessions to carriers, self-insured employers and third party administrators. Since 2012, Mark has presented educational content more than 550 times to more than 43,000 people in 41 states and the District of Columbia. He is also an accomplished writer, regularly blogging and tweeting and with many articles published in national magazines. His blog was recognized in 2016, 2017 and 2018 as a WorkersCompensation.com "Best Blog."

Mark serves on the Medical Issues Committee of the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions and the Workers' Compensation Committee for the Self-Insurance Institute of America. In addition, he serves as technical advisor to regulators and legislators in jurisdictions, 20 and counting, on subjects such as drug formularies, treatment guidelines, Opioid Task Force initiatives, encouraging support of non-pharma treatment options and the medicinal use of cannabis.

## CONNECT WITH MARK

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- Disable e-mail access on laptops and phones for one weekend each month.
- Incentivize the use of mindfulness and wellness apps.
- Encourage giving back to the community by matching contributions to local charities or facilitating a group event such as helping feed the homeless on Thanksgiving Day.

## The Options Are Endless

The options are endless, but the message is subtle yet strong. The best way to deal with life is to establish resilience, and the best way to establish resilience is through whole-person wellness.

Whole-person wellness is not just a corporate initiative but also a personal discipline, especially when it comes to managing non-cancer chronic pain. Whole-person wellness is a mindset. In fact, it's a lifestyle. Taking into account mind-body-soul helps build resilience through whatever method(s) that work for an individual at a specific time with a specific condition.

Those options can include clinical services such as prescription medications, acupuncture, deep tissue therapy, dry needling, cognitive behavioral therapy, chiropractic treatment, biofeedback and others. Other options that focus on self-management (a key to lasting success) can include mindfulness, yoga, an active lifestyle, strategically choosing a non-inflammatory

nutritious diet, deep diaphragmatic breathing, proper amount of sleep, music therapy and others. Chronic pain comes in many forms but a #BioPsychoSocialSpiritual treatment model co-authored by an educated clinician and patient will yield better results. Much of what has already been discussed can be part of that process, therefore the employer can help the employee understand their options and select what yields the best clinical outcome with the least amount of risk.

Not only will corporate and personal whole-person wellness positively impact absenteeism and presenteeism, which positively impacts productivity, but it will also encourage retention of talent. For many – and not just millennials – feeling cared for by the employer is a reason to stay. And nothing shows caring more than being intentionally obvious that each person's mind-body-soul wellness is a priority.

While being well is a personal decision that cannot be manufactured or mandated, an employer can encourage whole-person wellness and make that decision easier to follow. Remove any mixed messages being sent by leaders in the organization or corporate policies. In all things strategically reiterate the message – we want you to reach your full potential and we will do what it takes to make that happen.

It's actually easy to implement. Treat employees like you would like to be treated. The "golden rule" is never wrong.

Where do you send your injured workers?



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Dr. Randall Browning, M.D., M.P.H.  
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