

Final rules on employment wellness programs released

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The final rules support participatory wellness programs, which are usually available regardless of an individual's health status. These programs include reimbursement for the cost of membership in fitness centers; rewards for employees who attend monthly, no-cost health educational seminars; and rewards for employees who complete a health risk evaluation.

The rules also describe standards for nondiscriminatory health-contingent wellness programs, which reward individuals who meet a specific health-related standard. Examples include those who do not use or who reduce their use of tobacco and those who meet a specific cholesterol level or weight or body mass index target. Rewards are also offered to those who do not meet their goals but do take specific healthy actions.

"Today's final rules ensure flexibility for employers by increasing the maximum reward that may be offered under appropriately designed wellness programs, including outcome-based programs," according to an HHS press release. "The final rules also protect consumers by requiring that health-contingent [wellness programs](#) be reasonably designed, be uniformly available to all similarly situated individuals, and accommodate recommendations made at any time by an individual's physician based on medical appropriateness."

More information: [More Information](#)

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