

At-a-glance: Key variables influencing well-being program participation rates

Participation in health and well-being programs is impacted by numerous variables. Understanding these variables can help organizations design more effective programs that engage employees and drive meaningful outcomes. Below is a breakdown of the most influential factors:



1. Incentive Design

- **Amount:** Larger incentives tend to attract more participants.
- **Type:** Gift cards, premium reductions, HSA contributions, PTO, or Gym membership membership, etc.
- **Appeal:** The perceived value of both the incentive and the health action it supports is critical.
- **Fulfillment Speed:** Delays between completing an action and receiving the reward can reduce motivation.

2. Program Design

- **Health Action Relevance:** Actions must resonate with participants' interests and perceived needs.
- **Effort vs. Reward:** Programs should balance the number and complexity of required actions with the perceived benefit.
- **General Interest in Well-being:** A culture that values health supports higher engagement.

3. Communication Strategy: Clear, consistent communication across digital and traditional channels ensures awareness and understanding.

4. Organizational Support

- **Leadership & Peer Engagement:** Support from senior leaders, managers, and peers boosts credibility and participation.
- **Offer Paid Company Time:** Allowing employees to engage during work hours removes a major barrier.

5. **Confidentiality:** Ensuring that personal health data is protected encourages trust and participation.

6. **Program Maturity:** Familiarity with wellness initiatives over time can increase comfort and engagement.

7. Workforce Characteristics

- **Geographic & Shift Distribution:** Dispersed or shift-based workforces may require tailored approaches.
- **Access to Technology:** Connectivity to email, apps, and websites is essential for digital engagement.
- **Availability:** Employees with more personal time are more likely to participate.
- **Health Literacy:** Programs should be accessible to individuals with varying levels of health knowledge.

Participation Rate Benchmarks

Participation is defined as the percentage of eligible members who register and complete at least one incented action. General benchmarks include:

Participation Rate	Level
30-49%	Strong
50-69%	Very Strong
70%+	Best-in-Class

In summary, driving strong participation in well-being programs requires a thoughtful, multi-dimensional approach. From the structure and appeal of incentives to the strength of communication strategies and organizational support, each variable plays a critical role in shaping engagement. Factors such as health literacy, access to technology, and discretionary time, must also be considered to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness. By understanding and optimizing these variables, organizations can create well-being programs that not only attract participation but also foster lasting health improvements across diverse employee populations. UnitedHealthcare offers a range of solutions, tools, and resources designed to support the well-being of your employees. For additional resources, please connect with your UnitedHealthcare team.