

Q1. What is the background on the Wellness Program? Has this been done before?

A. After running some pilot programs as well as the successful introduction of a similar plan in Alaska, Premera rolled out their [Wellness Program](#) for all Washington small group plans starting 1/1/2014. Embedded in all plans, the Wellness Program is administered by Vivacity, a member of the Premera family of companies. Vivacity & Premera believe that by knowing their numbers (body mass index, cholesterol, glucose and blood pressure) employees stay healthier and can begin to address health concerns which may be identified by the screenings.

Q2. How much does the wellness program cost?

A. Premera has embedded the program into all plans. *There is no additional cost.*

Q3. Who can participate in the Program?

A. Currently, the participation-based wellness program is just for employees enrolled on the plan effective date— no spouses or children. Employers are required to provide COBRA participants access to the wellness program as well. New employees, enrolled after the effective date, are not eligible to participate. The program starts over with each plan renewal (once per year).

Q4. What is required in order to participate?

A. There are just two requirements for the enrolled employee – a biometric screening and an online health assessment. Completing these two requirements within the first 90 days of the plan effective date qualifies the employee and the employer for the incentive rewards.

Q5. How do employees obtain the screenings?

A. There are three ways to obtain biometric screenings. (1) Employees can visit their doctor and fax in the results using the [Premera Blue Cross Health Screening Form](#) (2) Employees can obtain a home test kit and submit the results through the mail. The home test kit can be ordered through the secure [Premera member site](#) and must be ordered 30 days before the end of the qualification period (by ~60 days after the effective date). (4) Worksite biometric screening (a scheduler will call to determine if a visit would be appropriate for the situation. If it's not, they'll encourage one of the other options above).

Q6. What's involved with the health assessment?

A. The health assessment is located on the secure [Premera member site](#) and is a series of questions which will help the member identify their own health status. From this assessment, employees are directed to helpful information on the member website or, in some cases, for free health coaching as part of the program. Health coaching is optional but a great resource for those dealing with chronic conditions.

Q7. If employees have significant health concerns, will it raise the group's premiums?

A. No. Information from the screening and the health assessment is personal and cannot be shared with the employer or affect the cost of the health plan.

Q8. Is there a participation requirement? Is there a minimum number of employees or a percentage of all employees?

A. No. Participation is completely optional. However, if no one participates, there is no reward for employer or employees. Rewards are only given to (or for) those employees that participate in the two required activities within the first 90-day period.

Q9. What's the incentive for groups or employees in this Wellness program?

A. Besides the potential for improved health, there are financial incentives for both groups and their employees.

To start, if an employee completes and documents their biometric screening and completes the online health assessment within 90 days of the effective date, they will receive a **\$100 VISA debit card**, just for participating. The card is mailed directly to the employee and the balance is available for 6 months. As the member uses the card, the balances can be found online. Completed wellness activity reports are provided to the employer for administration purposes. *(Note: the \$100 may be subject as taxable income to the employee)*

For the employer, the incentive is a reduced rate for the plan year for those employees completing the required wellness activities. It is a 7.5% rate reduction per participating employee retroactive to the plan effective date. Here's an example of what that could look like for two sample employees. Note that the older the employee is, the higher the

incentive an employer has for getting them to participate.

•**Sample Employee A - 23-years-old**

- Rate = \$282.07 (w/out participation) - 7.5% = \$271.95 per mo.
- Save \$21.16 per month

•**Sample Employee B - 64-years-old**

- Rate = \$846.20 (w/o participation) - 7.5% = \$782.74 per mo.
- Save \$63.47 per month

Sample rates shown for Premera Balance Gold 750 in Kina County area

Q10. How are the group's total rates calculated with the wellness program incentive?

A. Group rates equal = Discounted premium rates for the employees who complete the wellness program in time + premium rates for employees who did not complete the wellness program (including new hires after effective date) + the premium rates for all dependents. The discounted rates for those employees that complete the wellness program are applied within 30 days of completion and are retroactive to the effective date.

Q11. Are employers required to pass along the wellness discount they receive to the participating employees?

A. How to apply the wellness discount is the sole discretion of the employer. They can retain the entire discount; pass on to the employee or a combination. Ask us about additional plans employers may want to buy for their employees with the savings they gain through wellness (Critical Illness or Accident plans for example).

Q12. Are there tools available to help employers promote the program to employees?

A. Premera provides a series of email templates to send to employees as well as paycheck stuffers to use with paychecks at the start of the effective date. Posters and flyers are available to help promote the 90-day deadline. These materials are available in the [online employer toolkit](#). The employers with the highest participation in a Premera pilot program educated the employees early and often about the program. They also set a good example by showing *management* participation early-on in the 90-day period.

Q13. How does a member tell if they have completed the requirements?

A. A member can always contact Premera customer service to confirm that their biometrics and health assessment have been completed.

Q14. Why else should an employer want a wellness program?

A. Premera is offering this Wellness Program not only for the member and employer's benefit, but also because it makes business sense. The Wellness Program is one of the tools Premera is implementing to help bend the trajectory of the skyrocketing rate of healthcare costs in this country. Through improved health, members are less likely to have claims – or at least incur claims that are less expensive:

- By getting biometrics done, significant problems, such as very high blood pressure, can be identified and, through treatment and coaching, may be addressed before more extensive and expensive treatments, such as stroke rehabilitation, are needed.

- The health assessment questionnaire gives members a good idea of their overall health and gets members to register on the Premera website where they can find many health improvement tools and resources to better manage their health and their healthcare. The assessment and these tools are available to covered dependents as well, which may also help those members identify and manage health conditions – and in turn bring down costs to the plan.
- With more awareness of health conditions and resources to address them, employees participating in Wellness Programs bring an additional benefit often not measured or mentioned – improved productivity. While absenteeism is often measured and mentioned, “presenteeism”, or the ability to focus and be productive when you are on the job, is not. Having an understanding of your health and having additional resources to help improve it, provides employees the ability to focus better while on the job.

See our [Wellness Program video](#) (7:55) for a quick education on this program.