Presenteeism...

it’s costing your company a lot more than you know.

Fact: the majority of employees – at most levels – arrive at work each day experiencing symptoms – mental or physical – that impair their energy and mental acuity and cost companies hidden millions.

“... presenteeism costs employers $2,000 per employee annually.”

Cornell University study published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

A rapidly growing body of evidence across leading developed economies reveals that productivity lost on the job due to health-related symptoms is costing companies and the economy significantly more than all absenteeism and healthcare costs combined.

“... can reduce productivity by one third...”
(Desjardin Financial)

“Estimated to be greater than the costs of employee healthcare, drug plans and absenteeism, combined - approximately 5% of total payroll cost”
(CIGNA Behavioral Health)

Worse – the greater the intellectual, strategic and judgment components of a role, the more difficult it is to measure lost productivity and impaired quality and the greater their impact.

“Productivity, always an elusive concept, is particularly difficult to measure in today’s post-manufacturing, widget-sparse economy, in which so little of what we produce can be counted”. (Harvard Business Review)
Conditions contributing most to presenteeism are untreated chronic symptoms or diseases resulting primarily from dysfunctional lifestyles.

Certainly, genetic predisposition plays a role, especially in depression - the single most costly condition. Even symptoms of depression can often be mitigated by healthier lifestyles.

Most other costly conditions can be prevented, reversed or mitigated through four key lifestyle factors: diet, exercise, sleep and avoiding damaging substance use.

Solution: a different paradigm for organization health

Employee health initiatives are not ‘benefits’ or ‘perqs’ – they are investments in human capital that should produce positive returns.

At a time of changing healthcare legislation and rapidly increasing costs, especially for medications, many companies are reducing their commitments to employee health.

The solution lies in being firmly proactive and intervening before the costs are prohibitive, not in withdrawing to cut the visible costs while those caused by presenteeism ratchet up and out of control.

Employers have more at stake and a greater chance of success. The relationship employees have with their employer allows for greater influence and regular intervention. Incentives and sanctions – both within the employer’s influence - also have a role.
**Scienta Can Help**

Drawing on 7 years of experience in developing and operating the most scientifically advanced executive health center in Canada and on many more years in working with organizations to improve their competitiveness, Scienta Health has developed a 6-part customizable program that enables employers to:

- define and measure *presenteeism*,
- engage employees to understand the impact of lifestyle on health and *act to improve their health outcomes*,
- more efficiently and effectively target spending on health-related investments and programs, and
- measure the returns on these investments.

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**Critical Requirements for Success**

- **Awareness, recognition of the problem** – by employer and employee
- **Commitment** - to action, resourcing … a culture of wellness
- **Data-driven** - quantitative, qualitative: identifying conditions, severity, causes
- **Integrated, multi-faceted initiatives** – addressing all ‘drivers’
  - Lifestyle, behavioral
  - Work environment
  - Organizational - role design, reward system, communications
  - Physical – workplace amenities (food & beverage, physical activity, rest)
  - Home stressors
- **Tracking metrics**
  - Health indicators
  - Productivity indicators
Employees participate in complete confidence and immediately receive their own results, mapping their quantified symptom load against a benchmark of 45,000 respondents. Knowing results generates interest and, often, desire to learn more. Their personal reports may be downloaded for discussion with their physician.

Management receives a complete aggregated analysis and medical interpretation of results for the entire participating employee group, along with segmented analysis along numerous demographic and organization variables.

- Symptom levels are ranked and compared with national benchmarks, providing a reference for future surveying to test impact of interventions.
- Most intense, frequent and – typically – costly issues are highlighted for targeted intervention and serve as a reference for evaluating health and drug plans.
- Results are eye-opening and can be used to spur the organization to action.

A proprietary web-based survey explores presence, frequency and severity of approximately 150 physical, mental and emotional symptoms – eliciting more objective, accurate responses than typical behavior-focused health risk assessment questionnaires.
Obesity and diabetes drain productivity and dramatically increase health costs. They also increase incidence of depression, complications of diabetes and other chronic illnesses. In short, they represent the greatest risk to employee health and productivity.

Many are unaware they are pre-diabetic or have diabetes. Most do not know of the serious complications that accompany diabetes.

Today we have cost-effective access to pre-diabetes markers that enable early detection and reversal of the trend while still possible.

Scienta offers a system for low-cost, minimally invasive screening and ‘smart’, web-based reporting to and education of employees on their personal risks and action plans.
Many believe they know what’s ‘healthy’ but don’t have time or inclination. True, in many cases.

Equally true is that, notwithstanding constant media barrage, misunderstanding or even ignorance of basics about diet, exercise and sleep is widespread.

Compounding this are factors in the work environment – poor food selections, vending equipment full of sugar- or chemical-filled sodas, poor air circulation, increasing sedentary patterns – meetings, workstations, demanding travel schedules, long hours ....

We make reference to health profiles revealed in the Survey and educate employees through interactive sessions using simple messages and anecdotes that drive home key messages –

- How excessive caffeine causes low energy and weight gain
- What to eat for breakfast and lunch to maintain sharpness and mental acuity for hours
- Damage wrought by sleep deficiencies, the long-term dangers and ways to improve sleep hygiene
- How to maximize benefits of exercise when pressed for time
- Dangers of substance abuse

5. THE STARTING POINT - AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE

Behavioral Health Education

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Tracking productivity is easy in metrics-driven environments where inputs and outputs are constantly monitored and reported. This allows for setting benchmarks and tracking impact and trends over time.

More complicated is the challenge to assess productivity impact where intellect, judgment and strategic thought are key. At very least, we can measure symptom-indicated impairment and use this as a proxy. And we can track certain health outcomes.

Using the Healthy Activity, Weight & Virtual Coach system and the data uploaded from participating employees, we can track:

- Participation rates, trends
- Activity levels
- Team performance
- Goal achievement
- Weight reduction
- Blood pressure patterns
- Reduced absenteeism

The ‘Q-Gap’ Health Survey can also be rerun after 12-18 months to track patterns.

Difficulty in measuring presenteeism-driven productivity loss in management, professional services, software engineering and other intellectually intensive environments does not prevent tracking improvements ... in health indicators, employee satisfaction and, over time, improved business metrics.

The first step – Quantifying and Profiling Presenteeism in your organization – can be implemented without an up-front commitment to proceed with the various health initiatives. This alone will cost-effectively provide significant insights into the extent of the problem. It will also alert your people to become more conscious of their health.

Please contact us for a discussion about how Scienta Health can assist you in drastically reducing presenteeism to raise productivity, quality and employee satisfaction.