The wellness committee is a critical component of any health management program. Drawing members from different areas within the organization, this committee establishes continuity, motivation and broad ownership of the program. It also offers an opportunity for employees to become more involved in the health management program, with the thought that they may be more apt to change if they are involved in the process. Here are some steps to guide you in the formation of a wellness committee:

**Choose the right time to initiate your committee**
The timing of your wellness committee depends on the level of health promotion activities to be implemented. For example, if you choose a low-level awareness activity such as sending out educational health tips each week, the program coordinator can implement this activity with little or no assistance. If you decide to implement a larger program that entails educating and motivating the entire organization, then additional assistance will be needed. The wellness committee can provide advice and assistance during the planning, implementation and evaluation phases.

**Secure support of top managers/officers**
It is crucial to the success of your health management program that top management supports and is involved in your program. Consult with upper management prior to committee selection and seek input on possible members. Ideally, the committee should be appointed by management, taking into account those interested in participating. By having members appointed, the work becomes important to the company and not just another volunteer job that is easily forgotten when the workload increases.

**Consider the structure of your committee**
The committee should consist of one program coordinator and 5-10 members from various departments in your organization. Care should be taken to ensure that the committee is not solely composed of young, physically fit employees. Such homogeneity could lead to the alienation of others and possibly to limited perspective on health promotion issues. Members should seek to represent the views of their coworkers when bringing ideas and creativity to the table.

**Specify a service term**
Request a service term of one to two years and make sure the individual can meet the obligations. Rotate a few members at a specified time being sure to leave some seasoned members in place as new members rotate onto the committee. The goal is to have a wellness committee that is representative of the organization’s employee population.

**Review the roles and responsibilities with each new member**
Suggested duties include:
1. Actively assist in the planning, researching and implementing of the health management plan
2. Encourage participation in health promotion activities among coworkers
3. Provide feedback to the wellness committee regarding employees’ opinions and interest in health promotion activities
4. Recommend policy changes that are aimed at improving the health and safety of employees
5. Evaluate the progress of the company’s health management program
6. Serve a minimum of a one-year membership

**Schedule and facilitate an introductory meeting**
Bring the group together to discuss responsibilities and outline a basic implementation plan. Remember, a health management program should have a destination and it is the responsibility of the wellness committee to drive the company to that destination. Each meeting should have a facilitator and a note taker. These roles can be assigned or they can rotate. The leader should prepare an agenda for each meeting and a designated person should take notes and send them back out to the group after the meeting. It is important to keep these records.

**Develop your mission statement**
The committee’s mission statement should coincide with the company’s mission statement. Making health promotion part of the core business allows programming efforts to blend with day-to-day company practices.

**Collect data**
The committee should ensure that the company’s health management program has a direction and outcomes. Consider what data is available for use to assess your population’s risk and interest. Sources should include:
- Absenteeism & productivity data
- Claims data
- Culture audits
- Demographic information
- Disability & workers’ compensation data
- Employee satisfaction surveys
- Health interest surveys
- Health risk assessment data
- Biometric screening data

**Set goals and objectives for your health management program**
1. Craft an annual operating plan with specific, measurable goals that are aligned with corporate goals; are realistic and time bound (SMART)
2. Consider written policies to develop a culture of wellness
3. Implement appropriate interventions, based on your data review, that foster team support, engage a spirit of competition and promote all facets of wellbeing
4. Communicate health information and available resources in a diverse fashion to match the make-up of your population
5. Plan for ways to evaluate outcomes
6. Communicate results both to employees and management