

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

ADVANTAGES OF WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL  
IN THE RURAL OR SMALL COMMUNITY

A LEARNING CONTRACT  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
MODULE II

BY

THOMAS BICKERS

MARBLE FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT  
MARBLE FALLS, TEXAS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
RISING COSTS	2
CONDITION OF OFFICERS	3
MARBLE FALLS "WELLNESS PROGRAM"	4-9
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	10

## PREFACE

During the academy training, law enforcement agencies go to great length to have their future officers in top physical shape only to have the officers lose that conditioning when they fail to monitor the fitness of the employees. Other agencies use agility tests to determine the fitness of their prospective employees but never retest the employees again. With the rising cost of medical care, loss of productivity, the hardship placed on other officers, and the liability of the department, it is time for agencies to become concerned about the wellness of their officers. Marble Falls Police Department decided it was time to implement a "Wellness Program" due to the increasing health problems of many of their officers.

## ADVANTAGES OF WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL IN THE RURAL OR SMALL COMMUNITY

Americans think of fitness as an athletic endeavor rather than a condition of good health, improved appearance, and increased job productivity.

Based on current medical findings, businesses are jumping on the prevention bandwagon with work site wellness programs. A nonfatal heart attack can cost \$25,000-\$30,000 in hospitalization costs, worker's compensation, and higher insurance premiums. A fatal heart attack means the loss of a trained, experienced officer.

Studies conducted by Xerox Corporation, Quasar Systems, Goodyear Rubber, the United States Secret Service, and the Ohio Highway Patrol have shown the following evidence of cost saving after the implementation of wellness programs: an eighteen to forty-two percent drop in absenteeism; a four to eleven percent increase in productivity; improved morale; less employee turnover; and reduced health care costs.<sup>1</sup>

A wellness program provides management with the opportunity to give its employees the message saying, "We

<sup>1</sup>Fraser, A. Edward. "Physical Fitness Maintenance: A Development Process." The Police Chief (June, 1986).

care about you." Police administrators have long known that morale is a critical element in the quality of their officers' performance. Normally, the first consideration in the development/implementation of a wellness program is "Can we afford it?" The question should be, "Can we afford not do it?" The cost of a wellness program should be balanced against the costs to the agency in lost hours due to sick leave, disability, and limited duty status, as well as a host of other less direct costs.

Health insurance premiums are skyrocketing with yearly increases of fifteen to twenty-five percent. Larger companies like General Electric and Johnson and Johnson have established comprehensive programs of health screenings, life-style improvement programs, and work site changes to support healthier lifestyles. The Auto Workers Union has mandated in their contract with General Motors that "Wellness" benefits be provided for all members. Over a five year period hospital costs for non-participants doubled over the cost for participants.<sup>2</sup> The companies hit hardest with the rising cost of insurance have been the small businesses who have fewer resources to initiate such innovations as wellness programs.

<sup>2</sup> Fraser, A. Edward. "Physical Fitness Maintenance: A Development Process." The Police Chief. (June, 1986).

Like the small companies in the private sector, the majority of law enforcement agencies in the United States are made up of departments with less than twenty officers. These departments do not have the resources to institute an extensive wellness program, yet the availability of a wellness program is in many ways more desirable for a small department than for a larger one. In the small operation, there should be more emphasis on the health and condition of each and every employee because the sickness or absence of one or two people can impact greatly not only the workload of all others, but the organization's ability to provide service and protection.

Law enforcement officers take an oath to protect and serve the citizens of their communities, yet, many officers are unable, due to unfit physical conditions, to carry out this commitment. Law enforcement is primarily a sedentary occupation, but officers can be called upon suddenly to put forth an extraordinary effort for short periods of time. From this sudden activity comes a serious risk to the officer. Poorly conditioned officers should be a concern for all police departments. A department may be as liable for the unfit officer who fails in his ability to perform basic police duties as it is for his/her negligent appointment to the department.

Nearly sixty percent of all deaths in America result from diseases of the cardiovascular system and diseases

often associated with physical inactivity. In the field of law enforcement, the situation is even worse. In nearly every incidence of disease associated with poor physical fitness, law enforcement officers fare worse, particularly in the areas of coronary heart disease and lower back problems.

In addition to improving their physical health a wellness program results in the officers feeling better about themselves and their work environment, usually resulting in a decline in alienation from management and a significant improvement in performance. Physically fit persons live longer, perform better, and participate more fully in life than those who are not fit.<sup>3</sup>

Early in 1992, the Marble Falls Police Department decided that it was time for them to take a look at the health of their officers. For the past two years there have been several officers with health problems creating an extra load on other officers and a financial burden to the department. One of the first courses of action was the creation of a tobacco free environment in the police department. A general order was issued prohibiting the use of any tobacco products inside the building or within

3 Serra, Roger C. "Police Officer Physical Efficiency Battery". The Police Chief (January, 1984).

police cars. At the same time this order went into effect, the department looked at programs that would help officers maintain a healthy lifestyle through proper nutrition and exercise.

After meeting with different companies who offered "Health-Risk Management Programs", the police department decided to select the Health/Wellness Institute, Inc. of Lubbock, Texas, to implement a "Wellness Program". Health/Wellness Institute, Inc. makes a comprehensive analysis of the health status of each officer. The testing program includes:

Body Composition Assessment - analyzes percentage of body fat, percentage of lean muscle mass and assesses metabolism based upon the lean muscle mass. Also included in this computerized assessment is a caloric recommendation and exercise prescription designed especially for each officer.

Computer-Analyzed Profile - profiles the officer's personal health history with genetic and lifestyle health factors. The printout assesses the officer's health risks and makes suggestions for better health and preventative care.

Laboratory Blood Tests and Urinalysis - analyzes over thirty different chemical functions present in the blood. Among the results measured are levels of triglycerides, cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, glucose, electrolytes, liver functions, and kidney functions. It is



also used to test for anemia.

Pulmonary Lung Functions - tests for total lung capacity with expiratory flow and forced vital capacity.

Stool Check for Blood- screens for rectal cancer.

Sub-maximal Fitness Test - assesses the officer's level of fitness.

Flexibility & Strength Test - assesses the officer's flexibility and strength.

Two optional tests will be offered for the older officers. The PSA test, a test for males, is a new test for prostatic cancer. The Thyroid Panel (including the T3, T4 and TSH) is designed to check thyroid functions and disease.<sup>4</sup>

After this initial assessment has been completed and the results are presented to each officer, a follow-up assessment will take place in approximately six months. During the first year, behavior modification seminars will be conducted to assist the individual officers. In addition to the "Wellness Program" for the current officers, new officers shall have an assessment and be encouraged to participate in the seminars. At the present time the "Wellness Program" will be offered on a voluntary basis with

<sup>4</sup>Corder, Kathy. Health/Wellness Institute, Inc. "Proposal to the Marble Falls Police Department". (June, 1992).

the department paying for the expense involved in the testing and seminars.

To assess the continued improvement of the officers participating in the "Wellness Program" the evaluation scores developed by Dr. Kenneth Cooper of the Aerobics Institute, Inc. of Dallas, Texas, for sit-ups, push-ups and the one and one half mile have been selected by the department. Each officer should have at least a five percent increase in performance during each evaluation period until the officer attains the category--Good.

#### MEN'S SIT-UPS

Age Category	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
EXCELLENT	51+	49+	47+	44+	44+
GOOD	42-50	40-48	37-46	32-43	32-43
FAIR	34-41	31-39	26-36	20-31	18-31
POOR	25-33	22-30	15-25	7-19	4-17
VERY POOR	17-24	13-21	5-24	0-6	0-3

#### WOMEN'S SIT-UPS

Age Category	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
EXCELLENT	52+	42+	38+	37+	
GOOD	41-51	33-41	27-37	26-36	
FAIR	30-40	24-32	15-2	14-25	
POOR	19-29	14-23	6-14	5-13	
VERY POOR	8-18	5-13	1-5	0-4	

Age Category	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
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#### MEN'S PUSH-UPS

EXCELLENT	53+	44+	38+	30+
GOOD	44-52	36-43	31-37	24-29
FAIR	34-43	29-35	24-30	17-23
POOR	28-33	23-28	17-23	11-16
VERY POOR	0-27	0-22	0-16	0-10

Age Category	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
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#### WOMEN'S PUSH-UPS

EXCELLENT	25+	23+	18+	14+
GOOD	20-24	18-22	14-17	10-13
FAIR	14-19	12-17	9-13	6-9
POOR	9-13	7-11	5-8	3-5
VERY POOR	0-8	0-6	0-4	0-2

Age Category	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
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#### MEN'S 1.5 MILE RUN

SUPERIOR	<9:45	<10:00	<10:30	<11:00	<11:15
EXCELLENT	9:45+	10:00+	10:30+	11:00+	11:15+
GOOD	10:46+	11:01+	11:31+	12:31+	14:00+
FAIR	12:01+	12:31+	13:01+	14:31+	16:16+
POOR	14:01+	14:46+	15:36+	17:01+	19:01+

Age Category	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
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WOMEN'S 1.5 MILE RUN

SUPERIOR	<12:30	<13:00	<13:45	<14:30
EXCELLENT	13:30+	13:00+	13:45+	14:30+
GOOD	13:31+	14:31+	15:56+	16:31+
FAIR	15:55+	16:31+	17:31+	19:01+
POOR	18:31+	19:01+	19:31+	20:01+

It is the intention of this department to accept established medical guidelines for acceptable levels of body fat, triglycerides, cholesterol, HDL and LDL cholesterol, glucose, and electrolytes.

Marble Falls Police Department has established its "Wellness Program" on a voluntary basis to promote a plan that encourages good health and provides educational information on lifestyle issues, such as drinking, smoking, diet, and exercise.

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