



**GLOBAL WELLNESS  
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EMPOWERING WELLNESS WORLDWIDE

# TOWARDS ADVANCING HEALTH AND WELLNESS COACHING: WHERE WE ARE AND WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

- FEBRUARY 8, 2022-

## Global Wellness Institute: Wellness Coaching Initiative



**WELLNESS COACHING INITIATIVE**  
GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE

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**WELLNESS COACHING INITIATIVE**  
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## Executive Summary

In publishing **Towards Advancing Health and Wellness Coaching: Where We Are and What Needs to Happen**, The Global Wellness Institute, Wellness Coaching Initiative (GWI:WCI) provides clarity on the Health and Wellness Coaching profession globally.

Health and Wellness Coaches are experts on lifestyle and human behavior change, agents of change who fill a critical gap in our global healthcare systems by empowering people to cultivate personal agency, set and achieve health goals and build new health-supportive habits. No other health profession has this unique skill set.

This paper highlights the current state of health and wellness coaching globally and going forward, what needs to happen for Health and Wellness Coaches to better achieve their potential to meet societal demands globally, by empowering the public to take control in their own health and wellness.

Our objective is to describe the emerging role of health and wellness coaching in empowering better health and well-being, to help people around the world find a Health and Wellness Coach with professional credibility within established professional standards and scope of practice.

This paper is the collaborative work of a group of leaders in the field of Health and Wellness Coaching from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Singapore, and Europe.

Based on the synergy of Wolever et al.'s evidence-based research and industry-leading bodies, the GWI:WCI offers:

- A common definition of '*Health and Wellness Coaching*'
- A review of the state of the nascent Health and Wellness Coaching profession globally and the increasing variety of settings in which health and wellness coaching is delivered on the ground
- A review of the global trends in, and development of, delivery models for health and wellness coaching
- Recommendations for what needs to happen to further establish the profession to meet societal demand.

We conclude that the most critical factors to further establish the profession globally are:

- The integration of professional Health and Wellness Coaches credentialed by the National Board of Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC), UK Health Coaches Association (UKHCA), Health Coaches Australia and New Zealand Association (HCANZA) or future professional bodies into government supported preventative primary care and community care settings, corporations, and schools/universities
- A greater understanding of the role of the profession among the general public and adjunct professionals
- More evidence-based research at a national level, in diverse settings, to further demonstrate the benefits of Health and Wellness Coaches in improving population health and well-being.

As the profession of Health and Wellness Coaching emerges, its efficacy and credibility are being established. Moving forward, both as a standalone intervention, and as an adjunctive service to more traditional health care interventions, Health and Wellness Coaching requires investment and nurturing to achieve its potential to offer a significant contribution to the public, to healthcare systems and to society at large.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Susie Ellis and Nancy Davis of the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) who inspired the creation of the Wellness Coaching Initiative. Thank you, Nancy, for your visionary leadership to form this initiative to help define the credible Health and Wellness Coaching profession globally, and Susie for encouraging and supporting this work wholeheartedly believing in its importance to empower better health and wellbeing. Thank you to Beth McGroarty at GWI for recognizing the rising importance and benefits of Wellness Coaching around the world during the pandemic and authoring the 2022 GWI Trend on Global Wellness Coaching.

Our special thanks to:

Michael Arloski, Ph.D., PCC, NBC-HWC for pioneering the profession, engaging in discussion with GWI Wellness Coaching Initiative members and being a global advocate for the profession.

Gerry Bodeker, Ph.D., Prof., Green Templeton College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom; & Dept. of Epidemiology, Columbia University, New York, United States. Public Health Academic & Clinical Psychologist. Chair of the GWI Mental Wellness Initiative, for supporting credible Health and Wellness Coaches around the world and highlighting their critical role in educational settings and wellness experiences that lead to sustainable behavior change.

Dr. Kenneth R. Pelletier, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of California San Francisco School of Medicine and Director of the Corporate Health Improvement Program (CHIP) for being an early adopter of Health and Wellness Coaching in a multidisciplinary team clinical setting and recognizing the value of Health and Wellness Coaching profession in a corporate wellness programs globally.

We are grateful for all certified and aspiring Health and Wellness Coaches around the world for following their heart-centered purpose to help empower people for better health and wellbeing minimizing preventable disease.

We appreciate the support of our Global Wellness Institute (GWI) and Global Wellness Summit (GWS) communities to help build awareness of the importance and accessibility of Health and Wellness Coaches around the world.

*All pictures courtesy of UNSPLASH.COM.*

## Foreword

**Michael Arloski, Ph.D., PCC. NBC-HWC**

The time has come for the field of health and wellness coaching to rise to the challenge of global health. The population of the world today faces new threats from infectious disease while at the same time seeing rates of non-infectious, or lifestyle diseases continue to soar. At the very nature of lifestyle diseases are the human behaviors that drive them. The evidence is overwhelming from the field of Lifestyle Medicine that the onset and the course of these illnesses are affected, for better or worse, by our daily choices and behaviors. The behavioral nature of health is where health and wellness coaching can provide a great service for humankind.

This White Paper from the Global Wellness Institute Wellness Coaching Initiative outlines the myriad ways in which wellness coaching is being implemented around the world. It also challenges those of us within the field to address the question of how we can help meet the challenge presented above. Since pioneering this field in the mid-1990s, I have seen a rapid adoption of health and wellness coaching in many sectors of our society as its value has become irrefutably established through an evidential base that continues to grow.

This White Paper presents the consensus of how health and wellness coaching is defined professionally and importantly outlines the establishment of standards and credentialing for the field. As one of the founding members of the board of The National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching, I am very glad to see such standards being upheld and established in the U.S. and many other countries. This paper also makes the case for the effectiveness of health and wellness coaching in supporting the health of nations by presenting relevant research. The paper describes the current state of adoption of health and wellness coaching in numerous countries and also addresses the need for greater acceptance globally. My own company and I have trained thousands of health and wellness coaches around the world, and it is good to see how this paper outlines the various settings in which health and wellness coaching is being implemented.

Perhaps most importantly this White Paper looks at the future of the field and where it is trending. It explores the role that health and wellness coaching plays and may be evolving to play in preventative health and personalized care which aligns beautifully with the client-centered basis of coaching. The paper also forges on with an examination of how coaching can be further integrated into our society to meet the needs of all peoples.

Since I attended the world's first wellness conference in the mid-1970s the piece that I had always seen as missing, from my psychologist's perspective, was how to individualize wellness. In order to get at health

risk reduction for populations one truly has to begin with the individual and small groups. We can help improve the environmental and societal determinants of health and make it easier for people to be well. For many, though, it comes down to how does an individual improve their own lifestyle behavior. What we have seen is that having a professional ally to help guide that journey makes the path the person choses much easier to follow. Health and wellness coaching has arrived to meet that need and needs to be embraced.

Michael Arloski, Ph.D., PCC. NBC-HWC is the CEO and Founder of Real Balance Global Wellness Services (Real Balance, 2021), Inc. a major health and wellness coach training organization that has trained thousands of coaches around the world.



# GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE WHITE PAPER SERIES

## **Resetting the World with Wellness**

The Global Wellness Institute (GWI) is honored to participate in the Health and Wellness taskforce and working group that will assist the Vatican in crafting an integral response to the aftermath of COVID-19. Health and Wellness is a key pillar of response in this initiative, along with Ecology, Economy, and Security. In these difficult times, wellness can offer a vision for the future and can provide a roadmap for healing and growth.

This series of white papers builds on GWI's comprehensive understanding of wellness as a concept and in practice; integrates facts, data, and best practices; employs interdisciplinary thinking; and recommends strategies that can help the world reset with a proactive wellness-based mindset. The series will propose a wellness reset for the world in several areas, including the built environment, workplace, mental wellness, and more.

## **About the Global Wellness Institute**

The Global Wellness Institute (GWI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is considered the leading global research and educational resource for the global wellness industry and is known for introducing major industry initiatives and regional events that bring together leaders and visionaries to chart the future.

GWI positively impacts global health and wellness by advocating for both public institutions and businesses that are working to help prevent disease, reduce stress, and enhance overall quality of life. Its mission is to empower wellness worldwide.

## Section 1: Introduction



## Section 1: Introduction

The Global Wellness Institute, Wellness Coaching Initiative embarked on this White Paper to provide clarity on the Health and Wellness Coaching profession globally. The objective is to describe its emerging role in empowering better health and well-being, and to help people around the world find a Health and Wellness Coach with professional credibility within established professional standards and scope of practice.

The aim of this White Paper is to highlight what needs to happen for Health and Wellness Coaches to better meet societal demands globally by empowering the public to take control of their own health and wellness.

The global prevalence of preventable chronic diseases associated with unhealthy behaviors has reached epidemic proportions and negatively affects healthcare systems and economies worldwide. (Bloom et al., 2011; Meeto, 2008; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Given the strain of chronic illness on public health and disease management, clinical practice and employee assistance programs are evolving to support individuals to change their health behaviors to prevent and better manage disease (Merrick et al., 2008; Baicker et al., 2010; Wolever et al., 2013). One rapidly emerging strategy to facilitate this endeavor is Health and Wellness Coaching (Wolever et al., 2013). This modality empowers individuals to make supportive, sustainable lifestyle and health behavior changes using Health and Wellness Coaches.

Scientific evidence continues to show that diet, lifestyle, and environment are critical factors in creating optimal health. One important factor in the etiology of chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, obesity, and cancer is chronic inflammation, which can be influenced by nutrition and daily lifestyle choices. EPIC, a landmark long-term study of 23,000 people in 2016 studied the health impact of four simple behavioral choices – smoking cessation, exercising 3.5 hours weekly, eating a healthy diet and maintaining a healthy weight. Researchers followed up eight years later and found that people who adhered to the recommended lifestyle choices had a 78% lower overall risk of developing chronic disease. They reported 93% reduction in diabetes, 81% reduction in heart attacks, 50% less stroke and 36% fewer cancers (Ford et al., 2009). These data demonstrate that dietary choices, consistent exercise, and daily lifestyle choices based on the best science available can improve overall health.

The importance of immune health has grown during COVID-19. Researchers have concluded metabolic and microbiome health are important determinants of this aspect of our health. As with chronic diseases, diet and lifestyle choices either support or undermine metabolic and microbiome health affecting overall immune function. Evidence has

shown that choosing a diet that balances lipids, blood sugar and inflammation to promote metabolic health and a high-fiber diet for microbial health supported by the synergistic effects of sleep, exercise and stress management for microbiome health is effective in strengthening the immune system (Global Wellness Summit, 2021).

However, COVID-19 has created obstacles for living a healthy lifestyle. With the challenges of self-quarantining impacting family life during the pandemic, people are resorting to takeaway food, resulting in poor nutrition, which on top of stress undermines their health (Opler, 2020). In addition to the challenge of maintaining good routines around nutrition, exercise and stress management, people are struggling to connect with others, spend time in nature and maintain a positive outlook. These are all areas where Health and Wellness Coaches can add value and assist in overcoming these challenges (Bodecker, G., personal communication, December 2020).

Many individuals struggle to make changes that would enable health improvement (Prochaska & Prochaska, 2016). Multiple conditions call for health-related behavioral changes. However, many people prove unable to make or to sustain these changes and it would seem that the traditional methods of information-sharing and professional advice alongside other efforts to modify health-related behaviors have been of limited effectiveness (Kelly et al., 2016). Given the growing number of individuals with health needs and the significant difficulties in helping many of those engage in appropriate lifestyle changes, there is a compelling case for alternatives to the 'expert-led' approach and developing Health and Wellness Coaching to support individuals to cultivate autonomy, self-accountability and empower themselves to create and maintain health and well-being.

We are experiencing a new era of personalized care, with active participation in optimizing health. At the heart of this personalized health care system is support for the individual to engage in their own well-being in ways that are not only sustainable and cost-effective but offer outcomes for personal and public health and for the economy. Dr Jeffrey Bland, Functional Medicine Pioneer, states that there is an evidence-based shift to a personalized-care approach in medicine, with intensive patient management and disease-prevention strategies ultimately proving to be more effective than the current episodic treatment of disease (Bland, 2015).

Published literature reviews and compendiums on the effectiveness of Health and Wellness Coaches have focused on the reduction of medical risk factors prevalent in the population today. This research was conducted predominantly in healthcare settings and may have been influenced by

cultural aspects and demographic diversity. During the pandemic, where underlying health conditions increase the risk of death, the value of Health and Wellness Coaching takes on an additional dimension. Health and Wellness Coaches have an important role to play in preventative health by supporting people to adopt or maintain health behaviors that will serve to protect them against pandemics. Further studies reveal evidence of the usefulness of Health and Wellness Coaching in a wide range of situations (Sforzo et al., 2017).

The National Health Service (NHS) in England (2014) is focused on patient empowerment in the context of personalized care requiring a long-term partnership with patients. The need for novel interventions and approaches to service delivery suggest that a Health and Wellness Coach with a whole person approach could be placed at the heart of their care. Health and Wellness Coaching offers a significant contribution both as a standalone intervention and as an adjunctive service to more traditional health care interventions.

The Health and Wellness Coach supports individuals in making healthy choices for sustainable behavior change and can help the public to proactively take charge of their health and well-being. COVID-19 has accelerated global development of the Health and Wellness Coaching profession in clinical practice, insurance health plans, corporate programs, schools/universities, and spas/retreats.

This paper highlights the supportive role of Health and Wellness Coaches, the state of the profession globally, settings that services are delivered, the future of the profession and what needs to happen to further establish the profession to meet societal needs.



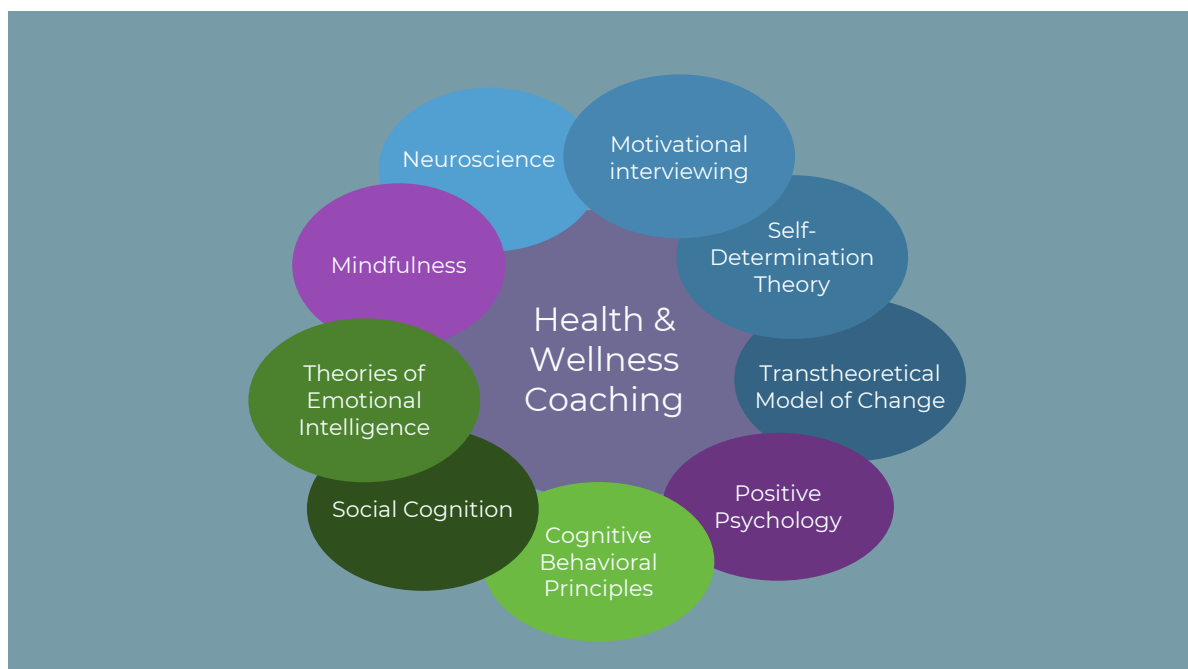
## Section 2: Health and Wellness Coaching Definition



## Section 2: Health and Wellness Coaching Definition

Health and Wellness Coaching draws from psychological theories concerned with motivation and behavior change in order to devise coaching interventions that are tailored to the individual client (Jordan, 2021; Moore et al, 2016). This often results in the use of an eclectic range of theories and models from applied psychology and health disciplines (Wolever, 2019).

Thus, a comprehensive training program in Health and Wellness Coaching is likely to draw upon areas that include motivational interviewing (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012); self-determination theory (American Psychological Association, 2021); transtheoretical models of change (Prochaska & Velicier, 1997); positive psychology (Park et al., 2014); cognitive behavioral principles and methods (Fenn et al., 2013); social cognition (Socia Cognition, n.d.); theories of emotional intelligence (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018); mindfulness (Nilsson et al., 2016) and neuroscience (Dossey et al., 2015; Erickson et al., 2014).



Although many coaches practice face-to-face, the recent global situation has necessitated an even greater prevalence of distance communication. Fortunately, coaching appears to be as effective when administered remotely by phone or the Internet when compared with face-to-face coaching (Gordon et al., 2016). This provides great flexibility, as coaching can be performed in person, over the phone, or via video conferencing.

The GWI Wellness Coaching Initiative studied peer-reviewed, evidence-based research publications to define the Health and Wellness Coaching profession globally and industry-leading governing bodies around the world.

The leading research by Wolever et al. in 2013 (Wolever et al., 2013), reviewed published literature from 800 abstracts to define Health and Wellness Coaching. They concluded that:

**Health and Wellness Coaching is a patient-centered process that is based on behavior change theory. The coaching process entails goal setting determined by the patient, encourages self-discovery in addition to content education, and incorporates mechanisms for developing accountability in health behaviors. Additionally, coaching occurs in the context of a consistent, ongoing relationship with a human coach who is trained in specific behavior change, communication and motivational skills.**

Consensus from the literature formed Wolever's et al. Health and Wellness Coaching definition as:

*Patient-centered approach wherein patients at least partially determine their goals, use self-discovery or active learning processes together with content education to work toward their goals, and self-monitor behaviors to increase accountability, all within the context of an interpersonal relationship with a coach.*

*The coach is trained in behavior change theory, motivational strategies, and communication techniques, which are used to assist patients to develop intrinsic motivation and obtain skills to create sustainable change for improved health and well-being (Wolever et al., 2013).*

There are three industry-leading Health and Wellness Coaching representative bodies around the world with definitions synergistic to Wolever et al.'s research:

- The National Board of Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC) in the United States
- The UK Health Coaches Association (UKHCA) in the United Kingdom and Ireland
- Health Coaches Australia and New Zealand Association (HCANZA) in Australia and New Zealand



Common themes defining Health and Wellness Coaching found in Wolever’s definition and reflected by the three industry-leading bodies are shown below. Shaded boxes indicate where the wording of the Health and Wellness Coaching theme is present in the definition.

Definition Common Themes	Lead Research	Industry-Leading Bodies		
	Wolever et al.	US NBHWC	UK UKHCA	Australia/NZ HCANZA
Colaborative				
Client-led process				
Self-determined goals				
Self-discovery				
Sustainable change				

As a profession, Health and Wellness Coaching does not have a global standard for credentialing or regulation. Instead, the development of this emerging profession has been led by the United States and United Kingdom where it is the most advanced.

In the US, the National Board of Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC) was established in 2012 and is the nationally recognized body for credentialing over 6,500 coaches. NBHWC established the first national standard for Health and Wellness Coaching in 2015. The Board emphasizes the importance of the coach positioning the client as the expert on their own life. Their published definition is:

*Health and Wellness Coaching is a client-centered, collaborative intervention whose primary aim is sustainable lifestyle change. Whilst coaches bring defined skills and knowledge to the process, the goals selected are client-determined and relate specifically to the health and wellness needs with the coach positioning the client*

*explicitly as the expert on their own life. Client accountability is central to the process (NBHWC, 2021).*

The United Kingdom Health Coaches Association (UKHCA) established in 2018, is the professional body for Health and Wellness Coaching in the UK and Ireland with over 600 members, and the first such professional body in the world.

In 2020, the UKHCA undertook a comprehensive strategic review of Health and Wellness Coaching around the globe and added a unique perspective which recognizes that Health and Wellness Coaches support people in working toward *whole health* as a dynamic continuum of adaption and resilience. Whole health can be seen as a progressive state of being, when health (physical, psychological, mental, emotional, social and spiritual state) and wellness (activities, choices, and lifestyle) are in balance. UKHCA states that:

*Health and Wellness Coaching is a client-led, collaborative process that aims to promote self-management, self-empowerment and equip an individual to adapt positively to their internal and external environment to create a state of resilience through the pursuit of activities and a lifestyle that cultivates their whole-health continuum (Natrins, 2020).*

In 2019, Health Coaches Australia and New Zealand Association (HCANZA) was created as a first step to provide a voice for the profession. The aim of the Association is to gain awareness of the work that Health and Wellness Coaches do and their scope of practice, and to set local standards for professional membership of the Association, based on recognized qualifications. Professional members are given the title 'accredited coach' although certification exams are not in existence. Health and Wellness Coaches who have completed NBHWC approved programs in the U.S., or met equivalent standards, may apply to become a member. Several local training programs exist that are recognized at an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 5 and in one case, have been approved by the NBHWC or their graduates are eligible to sit for NBHW certification.

HCANZA also highlights the importance of developing resilience for long-term behavior change. HCANZA believes Health and Wellness Coaching encompasses the sciences of positive psychology, behavior change, nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle medicine with the dynamic art of relationships, teamwork and community. Their Health and Wellness Coach definition is:

*Health and Wellness Coaches focus on guiding and assisting their clients to develop the resilience advantage that long term behavior*

*change delivers health and wellness outcomes. Health and wellness coaching is a patient or client-centered approach that focuses on assisting them to elicit and clarify their values, gain insights into their lifestyle practices and develop a deeper understanding of possibilities and pathways to resolution of their challenges.*

*For the patient or client, this is a journey of self-discovery that ultimately leads to them setting goals, accepting a level of self-responsibility, and experiencing positive self-determination. It is this self-awareness and knowledge that inspires and motivates them to bridge the gap between intention and action (HCANZA, 2021).*

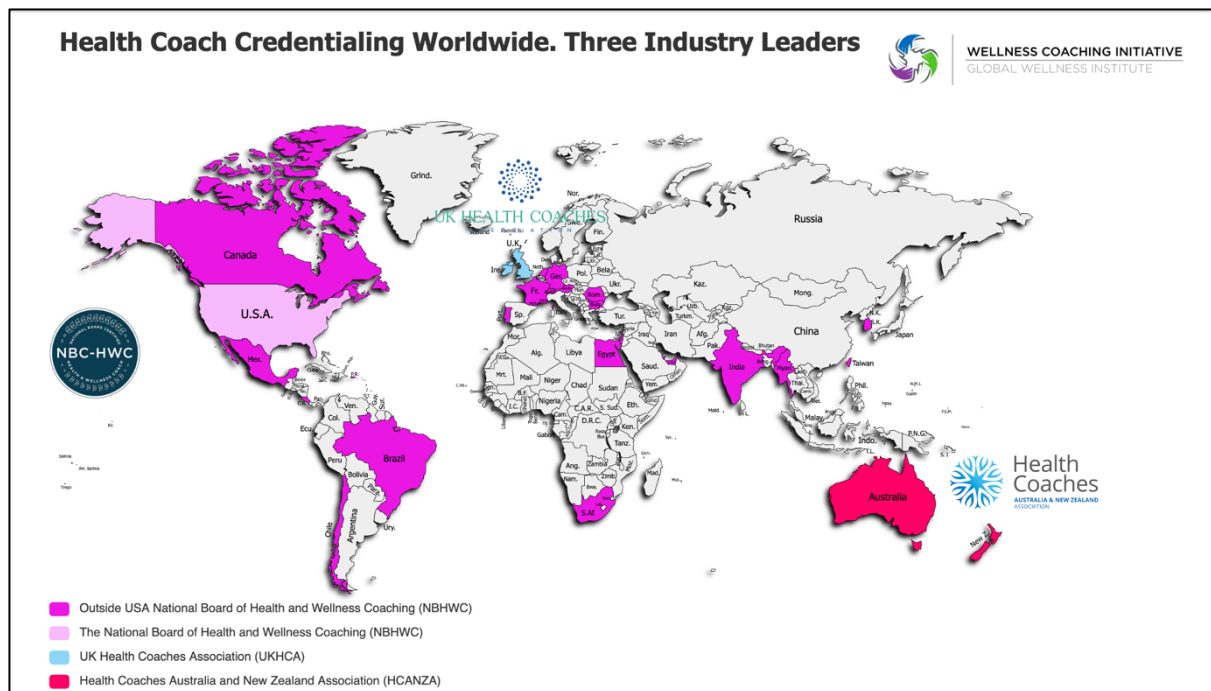
The Global Wellness Institute: Wellness Coaching Initiative's definition of Health and Wellness Coaching is based on the synergy of Wolever's et al.'s evidence-based research and industry-leading Health and Wellness Coaching representative bodies around the world. Additional components are the coaching approach and unconditional positive regard that empowers the client to be masters of their own health, wellness, and overall well-being:

*Health and Wellness Coaches work collaboratively with individuals and groups in a client-led process that supports the client in working toward self-determined health and wellness goals. Coaches support clients in using their self-awareness, insights, and personal strengths to develop management strategies for lasting behavior change. Coaches hold an unconditional positive regard as they empower the client to achieve their goals, using a process of discovery. Coaches support and encourage clients to become masters of their own health, wellness, and overall well-being (Global Wellness Institute Global Coaching Initiative, 2021).*



## Section 3: State of the Health and Wellness Coach Profession

Health and Wellness Coaching is not credentialed or regulated globally. The development and establishment of this emerging profession has been led by the United States and the United Kingdom where it is most advanced. See visual below.



### United States

In the United States, national standards were created for the profession by the National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC) in 2015. There is no law mandating these standards. The NBHWC certifies Health and Wellness Coaches who have successfully met and demonstrated its coaching competencies through examination and who adhere to ethical guidelines (NBHWC, 2021).

Established in 2015, NBHWC administers the board-certification exams. This exam was approved by the National Board of Medical Examiners. There are 6,500 coaches board-certified by the NBHWC as of this writing. The primary goal of Health and Wellness Coaches is to encourage positive behavior change in areas included but not limited to nutrition, physical fitness, stress management and smoking cessation (NBHWC, 2021).

According to Leigh-Ann Webster, Executive Director of the National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching, *“Health Coaches believe a client is already an expert in their own life and their own needs. Often clients know what they want but haven’t found the motivation within themselves to get where they want to go. That’s where Health Coaches can make a difference”* (NBHWC, 2021).

In 2019, the American Medical Association (AMA) approved Category III CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) codes (0591T, 0592T) to establish reimbursement for Health and Wellness Coaching. The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is tracking the use of coaching codes to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching as part of their whole health system of care. This data could support Category I CPT approval, meaning that health and wellness coaching is a well-established service and procedure that are consistent with current medication practice (American Medical Association, 2019).

The code is in effect through 2024 and is intended to support wide utilization and data collection, with and without reimbursement, required by the AMA approval for Category I. NBHWC-certified coaches are qualified to receive reimbursement for coaching services.

The code reflects what research is demonstrating that coaches have expertise that helps patients step into more active roles in their own care. *“NBHWC is optimistic the new codes will increase utilization of this service and support needed reimbursement in the near future”* – Ruth Wolever, Ph.D., and NBHWC Board Member (American Medical Association, 2019).

## United Kingdom

Public health and the wellbeing of wider society in the UK has been overwhelmingly dominated during 2020-2021 by COVID-19, and as the Chief Medical Officer’s Annual Report (Department of Health and Social Care, 2020) has highlighted, the substantial impact of this will be with us for many years to come. In the face of extraordinary challenges to health systems and healthcare professionals, there is hope brought by the emerging profession of Health and Wellness Coaches – qualified whole-health professionals who do not diagnose or treat a disease or condition, but who are experts in supporting lifestyle and behavior change for health improvements.

A survey was conducted in 2019 by the UKHCA in collaboration with a leading online patient health community in the UK, providing information and support for those with chronic health conditions. The survey evaluated how people felt about their health and wellness and whether they were getting the support they needed to manage it proactively.



The findings demonstrated the need for Health and Wellness Coaches and their potential value in supporting and improving the health of the nation. For example, while 88% of survey respondents understood that lifestyle is the main cause of chronic disease in the United Kingdom and want to know how to take control of their health, only 18.5% felt confident of taking control of their health on their own. Of those dealing with a chronic condition (61%) only 15.5% felt they really understood what had contributed to their condition. Additionally, respondents were overwhelmingly positive about working with a Health and Wellness Coach: 93.36% respondents felt it would be easier to make positive lifestyle change with the support of a Health and Wellness Coach, and 88.24% who used a health coach had a positive experience.

Health and Wellness Coaching is currently unregulated in the UK and Ireland and there are no national occupational standards at the time of writing. As the professional body, the UKHCA has issued a generic Scope of Practice for Health and Wellness Coaching in the UK and Ireland. In July 2021 the Association published its updated Standards for Education and Training for Professional Health and Wellness Coaches, defining the requisite knowledge, skills, and performance criteria at UK education Level 4. These standards create a framework for informing and approving providers of Health and Wellness Coaching education and training. Graduates qualifying from UKHCA-approved programs are eligible for full membership to the Association. While not mandated by law (UKHCA, 2021) members must explicitly agree to uphold and adhere to the UKHCA Standards and Scope of Practice.

In September 2021, the National Health Service England/Improvement (NHSE/I) commissioned the Personalized Care Institute (PCI) to set standards for evidence-based training in personalized care across a broad landscape of health and care in England. The PCI has launched a Personalized Care Framework, curriculum and training standards for providers of training programs seeking PCI accreditation. The standards for Health Coaching describe the knowledge and skills for a range of health professionals and define health coaching as: 'Helping people gain and use the knowledge, skills and confidence to become active participants in their care so that they can reach their self-identified health and well-being goals (Personalised Care Institute, 2021). UKHCA has been working to support the development of the PCI's Framework and the NHSE/I Health and Wellbeing Coach Capabilities Framework.

Even with the NHS coming onto the health and wellness landscape, the UKHCA remains the only professional body for Health and Wellness Coaches in the UK and Ireland and holds a public Directory of approved Health and Wellness Coaches. The professional standards for Health and Wellness

Coaches in the UK and Ireland comprise four pillars: Education and Training, Coaching, Health and Wellness and Professional Practice.

UKHCA are working on mentoring, supervision and career progression pathways for Health and Wellness Coaches in the UK and Ireland. These pathways will range from generic, entry level Standards and membership at UK educational Level 4 through Foundation and Honours Degree and Postgraduate level. Going forward, members may remain as experienced generalists, or elect to specialize and work within defined disciplines, disease states or specific client groups.

The UKHCA has opened membership to International and Affiliates. This expansion will promote and encourage awareness of the role and contribution of Health and Wellness Coaching and so build community and foster collaborations across disciplines and with key stakeholders within and across the whole-health space.

## Europe

Health and Wellness Coaching in Europe is not credentialed or regulated in Europe. The profession is less developed than the US and UK. The International Coaching Federation (ICF) standard is the coaching body well accepted in Europe since 2015 and awareness continues to grow due to COVID-19. Although Health and Wellness Coaching is not credentialed by ICF, there is a Health and Wellness Coaching Community of Practice within the ICF (ICF, 2021). Individuals and corporations seeking general, non-specialized coaching are minimally requiring ICF certification because they understand its importance (Kocher, E., personal communication, May 21, 2021).

Coaches who have followed the ICF coaching pathway are working in corporations as part of workplace health management programs. Coaching programs are supporting employees to reduce stress, strengthen team connection to boost mental wellness, and enhance their working from home environment to improve overall wellness (Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz, 2021). Many multinational American companies are bringing corporate wellness programs to their employees across Europe.

National governments across Europe have not integrated Health and Wellness Coaching into a clinical or school/university program at the time of writing. The profession will develop in Europe when prevention is recognized as the future and Health and Wellness Coaching is reimbursed by governments globally. Countries like Switzerland, where Alternative and Integrative Medicine are accepted, may be the early adopters of Health and Wellness Coaching. In 2014, the Swiss government founded Swiss Health Promotion (SHP) (Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz, 2021), a foundation



funded by the largest insurance companies in Switzerland. The SWING study in 2009, across nine large companies in Switzerland helped shape SHP based on data that systemic health promotion can contribute to the recognition and reduction of stress. Accountable to the Swiss government, Swiss Health Promotion's legal mandate is to initiate, coordinate and evaluate health promotion measures in the workplace, an effective potential setting for Health and Wellness Coaches (Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz, 2017).

## Asia-Pacific Region

The current health climate and pandemic situation has brought health and wellness into the forefront of many countries in Asia. Preventative health and wellness which was considered nonessential pre-COVID, is now the focus of many governments and institutions and should ideally be considered the first line of defense (Lee et al., 2020). The focus on lifestyle prevention is as important as ever, and Health and Wellness Coaching is seen as a way to support individuals for lasting behavior change.

There is no recognized body in the Asia-Pacific region that accredits and certifies Health and Wellness coaches to the extent of the US National Board of Health and Wellness Coaches (NBHWC) or United Kingdom Health Coach Association (UKHCA). A small number of Asia-Pacific Health and Wellness Coaches are credentialed by the NBHWC; and/or by the International Coaching Federation (ICF) which focuses on broad coaching skills and does not include credentialing for Health and Wellness Coaching expertise in evidence-based, sustainable behavior change.

## Singapore

Health and Wellness Coaching is not credentialed or regulated in Singapore at the time of writing. Health and Wellness Coaches may follow the National Board Certification pathway in the US by the NBHWC and/or broad coaching certification by the International Coaching Federation (ICF) if they choose to do so. The international credentials by NBHWC and ICF resonate in Singapore and the government recognizes the value of the Health and Wellness Coaching profession to influence behavior modification and lifestyle change. The prevention-focused Singaporean government is providing free access to Health and Wellness Coaches through multiple approaches including community-based population-health initiatives, prevention strategies for high-risk populations and as an adjunct modality in primary care.

*Community-based Health and Wellness Coaching:* In support of Singaporeans caring for their own health and well-being, the Ministry of Health encourages a healthy lifestyle through continuous health campaigns, online portals and apps with customized information, and incentives to promote healthy lifestyle changes and help the population minimize the risk of disease. Health and Wellness Coaching offered by the government is usually covered by insurance through community-based programs that provide personalized one-on-one coaching and group coaching sessions (Ministry of Health Singapore, 2020).

*Health and Wellness Coaching for high-risk populations:* Singapore's Health Promotion Board, which advocates prevention, early detection and appropriate management, provides access to personalized Health and Wellness Coaching to diabetic patients through Sport Singapore and Diabetes Singapore (Iau, 2020).

*Health and Wellness Coaching as adjunct modality in primary care:* The National Healthcare Group recognized that the main drivers of healthcare utilization and cost due to frailty, the rising prevalence of chronic disease and the impact of poor lifestyle habits cannot be addressed unilaterally by the healthcare system and need different interventions and support. The resulting focus to strengthen Primary Care includes systematic screening, early identification of frailty, lifestyle interventions and includes Health and Wellness Coaching for behavior modification (National Healthcare Group, 2021).

At the time of writing, Health and Wellness Coaching is not a professionalized industry in Singapore. There is much room to grow in terms of the standardization and professionalization, though the method is recognized as effective in behavior change modification, as evidenced by utilization in public health programs.

## Australia

Australia has remained relatively protected from the effects of COVID-19 due to its geographic location, border closing, strict quarantining, and social distancing. However, the rising disease and death rates, both locally and internationally, have highlighted the need for a renewed focus on preventative (World Health Organization, 2021). The National Preventative Health Strategy (NPHS) is considering development of mental health and preventative health programs, as outlined in Australia's 10-year Long-Term National Health Plan, to help Australians improve their health through early interventions, better information, targeting risk factors and the broader cause of health and wellbeing. At the time of writing, Health and Wellness Coaching is not currently integrated into the NPHS (Australian Government Department of Health, 2019).

Health and Wellness Coaching is not credentialed or regulated in Australia. A growing number of Health and Wellness Coaches have followed the US Board Certification pathway at the time of writing, the most widely recognized in the industry. Australia has begun a long journey to gain government and public acceptance of the role Health and Wellness Coaches play in both preventing and supporting people living with chronic lifestyle related illness. Awareness of Health and Wellness Coaching standards and credentials, as well as evidence-based research at the national level supported by reimbursement is needed to establish the profession.

In 2019, Health Coaches Australia and New Zealand Association (HCANZA) was created as a first step to provide a voice for the profession. The aim of the Association is to gain awareness of the work that Health and Wellness Coaches do and their scope of practice, and to set local standards for professional membership of the Association based on recognized qualifications. Health and Wellness Coaches who have completed approved programs by the National Board of Health and Wellness Coaches in the U.S., or met equivalent standards, may apply to become a member. Several local training programs exist that are recognized at an Australia Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 5 and in one case have been approved by the NBHWC in the US or their graduates to sit for Board certification (Wellness Coaching Australia, 2021).

In Australia, with the work of HCANZA a recognition of standards of training is essential to the credibility of health and wellness coaches. At present there is no certification program under way which would need to be created and run by an independent body to the Association and existing coach training organizations. The NBHWC Board certification is the gold standard; however, several Diplomas recognized by the Australian Government's skills quality standards are being offered. Discussions with both government and private insurers needs to happen to create further understanding and unity in what health and wellness coaches do and do not do. Partnerships with leading healthcare organizations is currently under discussion and exists if only informally with recommendations for the Association and approved training providers.

## Section 4:

# Settings for Delivering Health and Wellness Coaching Profession



## Section 4: Settings for delivering health and wellness coaching profession

Globally, the common established settings for Health and Wellness Coaches are in private practice, clinical practice as part of a multi-disciplinary team, insurance health plans and corporate wellness programs. Schools/universities are an emerging setting as a result of COVID-19. Wellness spas / retreats and fitness centers are less developed globally. There is sufficient evidence supporting the effectiveness of Health and Wellness Coaching in clinical practice, insurance health plans, corporate settings and schools/universities. Where the profession is being delivered increases as evidence grows to support the value of Health and Wellness Coaching in creating lifestyle change. Health and Wellness Coaching can be found in community center educational programs, health retreats and spas, and any other setting where people are seeking support for lifestyle behavior change (Cosgrove & Corrie, 2020).

*White boxes in the image below indicate where Health and Wellness Coaching is established. Europe excluded due to ICF not NBHWC or UKHCA certification.*

Health & Wellness Coach Settings	US	UK	Singapore	Australia
Private Practice				
Clinical Practice				
Insurance Health Plan				
Corporate				
School / University				
Wellness Spa / Retreat				
Fitness Centres				

## Private Practice



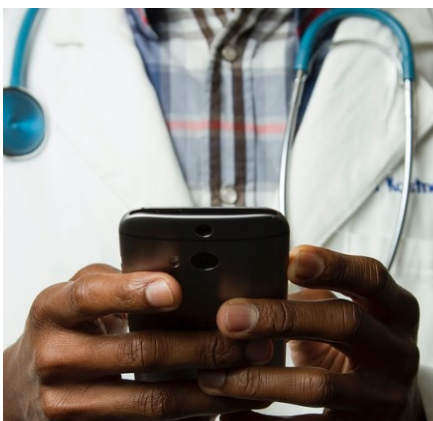
A large number of Health and Wellness Coaches work independently in private practice as sole practitioners. Private practice allows a degree of independence and freedom which appeals to the entrepreneurial spirit of Health and Wellness Coaches. A survey of 243 NBHWC certified coaches found that more than half wanted to enter private practice after training (Babcock, 2020). Reports from the UKHCA and HCANZA professional associations suggest that approximately 80% of their members work in private practice. Membership

offers Health and Wellness Coach sole practitioners a representative voice, supportive community of practice and structured opportunities for continuing education and professional development.

This is the context of choice and reflects a growing market demand for a different type of support to help make lifestyle and behavior change. People are increasingly seeking out a more participative and personalized connection with their health providers. Health and Wellness Coaches are ideally placed to address this need, offering individualized support in a safe, caring and client-led relationship.

Establishing an independent private practice or collaborating with a with a small team of adjunct health professionals, expedites putting newly acquired Health and Wellness Coach skills into practice and gaining valuable experience. Opportunities for Health and Wellness Coaches in all settings are continuing to emerge with the growing market demand and development of the profession.

## Clinical Practice



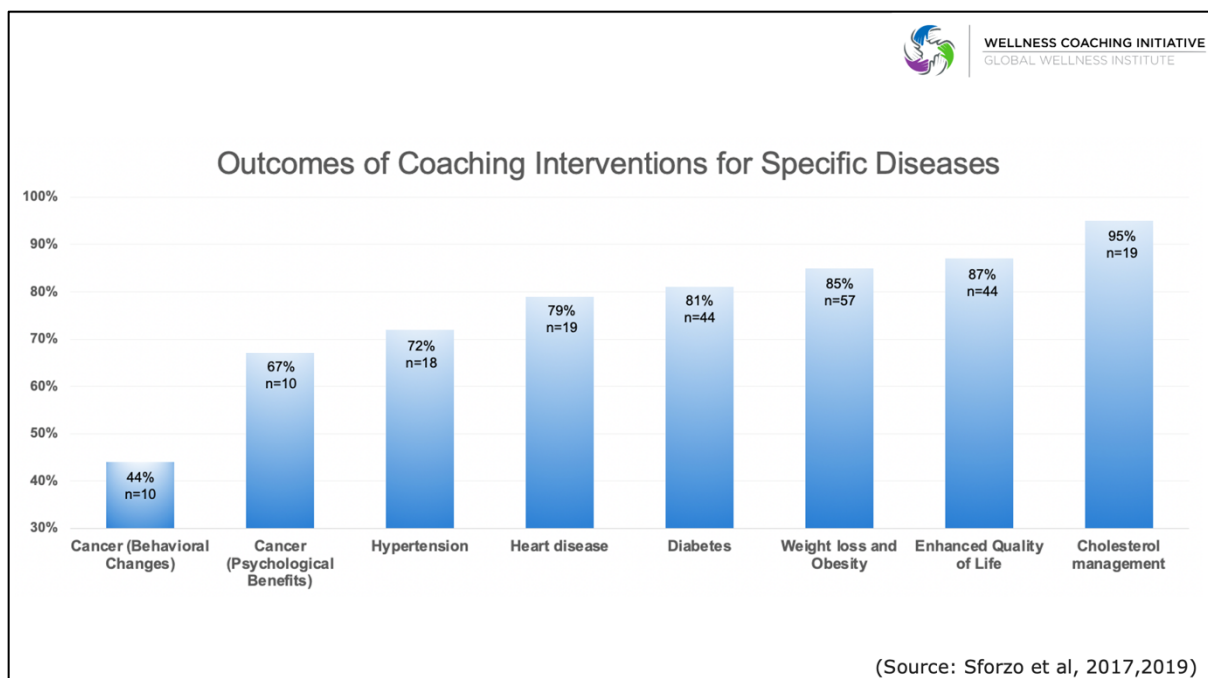
The most comprehensive work on the effectiveness of Health and Wellness Coaching are two systematic reviews published (Sforzo et al., 2017,2019). A sizeable sample of 219 papers in 2017 with 104 added in 2019 concluded that Health and Wellness Coaching is an effective intervention, particularly with certain chronic lifestyle conditions and the reduction of medical risk factors. Six clinical categories were identified including weight loss and obesity, diabetes, heart disease,



hypertension, cancer, and cholesterol management. The compendium and addendum offer optimism that Health and Wellness Coaching can play an important role in clinical practice.

The cornerstone of primary care is managing and preventing chronic disease. Limited resources and time constraints does not allow for extended time with patients in order to explore their motivation and readiness to change health behaviors. Health and Wellness Coaches are gradually being integrated into a multidisciplinary team that can support the patient toward sustainable behavior change and self-management. Evidence has shown that health coaching can *"improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of managing chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, mental health, and obesity"* (Gastala et al., 2018).

### Summary of results reported in Combined Compendia



(Sforzon et al. 2017, 2019)

In the United States, Dr. Kenneth R. Pelletier, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of California San Francisco School of Medicine and Director of The Corporate Health Improvement Program (CHIP), provides perspective on the value of Health and Wellness Coaching based on his clinical experience. He acknowledges that Health and Wellness Coaches support the client to set clear, realistic goals, examining the assumptions that led to those goals. He emphasizes the value of the Health and Wellness Coach being able to hold the client accountable and examine the barriers that they may have to overcome (Pelletier, K., personal communication, November 17, 2020).

Another perspective on the role of Health and Wellness Coach in the US by Matt Clark, Clinical Health Psychologist at the Mayo Clinic states that a Health and Wellness Coach has unique value, for example as part of a weight loss team. A physician can provide medical clearance and guidelines for physical activity, a registered dietician can help develop a personalized nutrition plan, and the Health and Wellness Coach helps clients follow their healthy-living plan. Health Wellness Coaches are trained in empathy, motivational interviewing and behavioral counseling skills and can help individuals set realistic goals (Clark et al., 2014).

In the UK NHS primary healthcare sector, Health and Wellness coaching is now a formally recognized support role within a multi-disciplinary team, financed by government funding, and recruitment is well underway nationally. In the multi-disciplinary private sector of Functional Medicine and Lifestyle Medicine, clinicians also recognize the value of Health and Wellness Coaching and are recruiting credentialed Health and Wellness Coaches to support the work of the clinician. Additionally, Lifestyle Medicine clinicians are increasingly seeking their own Health and Wellness coach training and are becoming UKHCA members. The British Society of Lifestyle Medicine (BSLM) offers group and virtual group facilitators the opportunity to become accredited against the BSLM's Standards Framework, a supporting role open to both clinical and non-clinically trained facilitators and one highly relevant to the skills of a Health and Wellness Coach (BSLM, 2021).

Singapore's National Healthcare Group puts an emphasis into "*Living Well: Wellness at Every Stage of Life.*" They focus on three paradigm shifts in health care delivery: "*from a one dimensional to holistic definition of health, from disease centric to community based, preventive person-centered care, and from a mindset that living well not only applies to people who are disease free, but it also includes people across all health states (National Healthcare Group, 2021).*" The goal is to empower the population to live well and inculcate a "*culture of health ownership.*" They developed the Coaching for Health Action and Management Program that assists people towards healthy lifestyle habits. It is a group coaching initiative that sits alongside other primary care interventions such as community health screening and wellness clinics to support individual's healthy lifestyle practices.



## Insurance Health Plans



Health and Wellness Coaching programs among over 14,000 health plan members were evaluated for reducing preventable lifestyle disease over a period of six months. The study showed self-reported positive results in areas of reduced stress, improved physical activity, nutrition, and weight loss. This study is an indication that insurance companies are interested in the value of Health and Wellness Coaching as a way of reducing health care costs. The scale of the study also demonstrates

the potential effectiveness of Health and Wellness Coaching in a large and diverse setting (Budzowski et al., 2019).

In the United States, an increasing number of health insurance companies including UnitedHealth Group, Aetna and Blue Cross Blue Shield are providing free Health and Wellness Coaching to their members with a combined total of 190 million lives (Opier, 2020).

Health insurers in Australia are offering rebates on Health and Wellness Coaching for members of their private health funds. The service is provided by a healthcare professional trained in behavior change coaching principles. Examples include Bupa Health Coaching offering telehealth of up to 6 calls over 6 months, "HealthierMe" offers coaching for up to two years if criteria are met, and HCF COACH program that offers telephone coaching for up to six months for people with diabetes and heart-related health conditions. It should however be noted that the training of the health coaches is varied and usually short in duration with coaches instead of relying on their previous health qualifications to offer what may be at times advice, rather than coaching (HCF, 2021; BUPA, 2021).

## Corporate Settings



Evidence exists to support health and wellbeing outcomes when Health and Wellness Coaching is delivered in a corporate setting. Clark et al. in 2014 reported psychosocial benefits for one hundred employees in a corporate setting which included quality of life, reduced depressive symptoms and perceived stress levels (Clark et al., 2014). The coaching program was delivered over a period of 12 weeks. Following another corporate wellness

coaching program, Mettler et al. (2014) found that motivational levels were increased in wellness-related areas such as life satisfaction, energy level, healthy weight, mental and emotional fitness, and health management. A further finding was that confidence and readiness to change increased significantly in all areas.

Workplace wellness and corporate wellbeing has been a big topic in recent years. Workplace wellness is defined by the Global Wellness Institute as *"any workplace health promotion activity or organizational policy designed to support healthy behavior among employees and to improve health outcomes (GWI, 2021)."* This has especially been relevant given the pandemic and how the workplace has seen big shifts in how they operate and deal with uncertainty and increased employee stress and burnout. A study by Fedesco et al. tested the impact of wellness coaching intervention on employees of various organizations. They found that wellness coaching is a *"beneficial intervention that may save employers money on health care expenditures down the road (Fedesco et al, 2018)."* Corporations are integrating Health and Wellness Coaching into their programs as a part of an offer to bring a culture of health in the workplace, as well as to increase employee engagement, retention, and performance (Picarella, 2020).

According to the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA), overall wellbeing in the US continues to decline, stress is increasing, and chronic disease is rising. In WELCOA's expert interview with Dr. Michael Arloski,

**One of the founders of the field of Health and Wellness Coaching, he states that "Health Coaching needs to be a part of a comprehensive wellness program in order for it to get a measurable effect (Picarella, 2020)." WELCOA has defined the characteristics of effective worksite wellness coaches as the following: "An ability to connect with others, empathy, ability to establish trust, ability to help people discover change and transformation, a desire for problem solving, ability to create a positive emotional experience, organizational awareness and a belief that the coach has the questions, and the client has the answers (WELCOA, 2021)."**

Health and Wellness Coaches in the corporate setting deal with topics that cover physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, with particular emphasis on burnout, stress and cultivating resilience. The need for this employee support is increasing particularly in this volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) time. The cost of not taking care of employees is significant. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the US productivity loss to employee absenteeism costs employers \$225.8 Billion annually. Also, those with chronic disease and health problems missed 450 million more days of work each year compared to those who are healthy. The health coach is able to meet the employees where they

are and support them to create sustainable and personalized steps towards wellness. The goals of Health and Wellness Coaching for companies is to increase productivity, decrease stress and promote healthy behaviors. This can mean lower costs such as insurance premiums and workers compensation claims (Dupuis, 2021).

In the UK, demand for Health and Wellness Coaching as part of corporate employee well-being and wellness at work is rapidly growing. Health and wellness coaches are self-employed contractors, contractors working within a well-being service or directly employed within an organization. While the Health and Wellness Coaching industry is rapidly moving to well-qualified and credentialed health and wellness coaches, the corporate sector is varied, and employers are not demanding approved credentials as a matter of course.

In Singapore, AXA Life Insurance has partnered with Naluri, a digital therapeutics company, offering digital health coaching focusing on mental wellbeing to companies giving them access to mental wellness programs and coaching via chat (Mae, 2020). Other companies now also offer Health and Wellness Coaching as part of employee assistance programs through approved providers.

## Schools / Universities



Health and Wellness Coaching in educational settings is increasing although research is not as developed as other settings. A wellness coaching program delivered to 600 higher education students over approximately 3000 sessions was reviewed by Larcus et al. (2016). The aim of the program was not focused solely on academic success but instead aimed to promote all dimensions of student wellness with a particular focus on mental wellbeing. Exit surveys yielded improvements in self-discovery, navigating transitions and self-acceptance. Another example of the wide reach of Health and Wellness Coaching in terms of populations it can benefit and outcomes it can achieve.

## Wellness Spas / Retreats



Health and Wellness Coaching is integral to wellness spas that offer a holistic perspective. Destination spas have embraced both the 'at the spa coaching model' and post-stay coaching connections. Health resorts offer online sessions with a team of wellness experts after the customer leaves the facilities (Ellis, 2016). This remains to be a growing industry in the wellness spa sector. In Australia, Health and Wellness Coaching was introduced into

the Golden Door group of Health Retreats in 2011 as an optional service for guests who stayed at the retreat for a period of five to seven days. Guests received one initial coaching session at the start of their stay and a follow up before they left. After working through a series of self-reflective exercises determining changes, they wished to make, and the reasons why, the barriers that could get in the way and areas for change in which they could set goals. Their final session was with a coach who supported them in establishing goals to work towards over a period of three months, week by week. A follow up support program by telephone was offered to guests who wished to continue.

## Fitness Centers



Training exercise/fitness professionals in Health and Wellness Coaching skills is increasing (ACSM, 2021). In Australia, there has been a strong interest from the fitness industry for credentialed professional development training. Exercise/fitness professionals are completing short-course training for Health and Wellness Coaching skills to be more effective in their current role or are completing NBHWC certifications to provide Health and Wellness Coaching as an additional service.



## Section 5: The Future of Health and Wellness Coaching: Global Trends



## **Section 5: The Future of Health and Wellness Coaching: Global Trends**

During the pandemic, where underlying conditions increase the risk of death, the value of Health and Wellness Coaching in preventative health takes on an additional dimension. 2021 Global Health and Wellness Coaching Trends are systematically integrating Health and Wellness Coaching into new delivery models including personalized preventative primary and community care, corporate and school/university wellness programs, through a hybrid coaching model supported by technology that compliments the face-to-face human connection.

### **Personalized preventative care, a new era of health care, is integrating Health and Wellness Coaches.**

The center of the personalized health care system is support for the individual who is engaged in their own well-being in a way that is cost-effective and sustainable. Through the support of a multidisciplinary team with a Health and Wellness Coach, individuals are empowered to make choices and control based on their needs and what matters most to them. Dr. Jeffrey Bland, Functional Medicine Pioneer in the United States, states that there is a shift in the approach to medicine to personalized care, offering a reliable guide to optimal health. These personalized approaches with disease-prevention strategies will ultimately be proven to be more effective than the current episodic treatment of disease (Bland, 2015).

The National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom is focusing on patient empowerment in the context of personalized care requiring a long-term partnership with patients (Personalised Care Institute, 2021). The need for novel interventions and approaches to service delivery suggest a Health and Wellness Coach with a whole person approach at the heart of their care (Natrins, 2020). There is recognition in the United Kingdom that Health and Wellness Coaching offers a significant contribution both as a standalone intervention and as an adjunctive service to health care interventions.

### **Governments in preventative health focused countries are expanding community-based programs and providing free access to Health and Wellness Coaches.**

Preventative health and wellness which was considered nonessential pre-COVID, is now the focus of many governments and institutions and should ideally be considered the first line of defense (Lee et al., 2020). The focus on lifestyle prevention is as important as ever and Health and Wellness

Coaching is seen as a way to support individuals for lasting behavior change.

In the UK, Health and Wellness Coaching has a significant supportive and educative role in community initiatives such as the NHS England-Local Authority's Integrated Personal Commissioning initiative, launched in 2017. This care model uses a community-based approach to supporting people to build or rebuild their health knowledge, skills, and confidence, recognizing that people are experts in their own health. The approach draws on the potential of communities to support their own health and wellbeing, utilizing peer support and community capacity to empower people and improve the network of formal care services with community resources.

The model is congruent with the fundamental tenets of Health and Wellness Coaching and empowers individuals and their communities through their own strengths, wider relationships, and networks. Resultant population health benefits were significant improvements in well-being, reductions in the need for acute care and lower psychiatric admissions (NHS England, 2021).

In Singapore, the government is supporting Singaporeans to care for their own health and well-being. The push for a healthy lifestyle is undertaken by the Ministry of Health, which regularly rolls out health campaigns. Online portals and apps provide customized information and incentives to promote healthy lifestyle changes and help the population minimize the risk of disease. The government recently expanded the community-based program to let patients get support from Health and Wellness Coaches in personalized one-on-one coaching and group coaching sessions (Iau, 2020).

The Australian government has become more focused on preventative health with the growing realization that lifestyle related illnesses are a major risk for disease and COVID-19 (Kelinamiller et al., 2020). With initiatives such as The National Preventative Health Strategy and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality of Healthcare, the government is moving towards supporting key concepts that Health and Wellness Coaching embraces – person-centered care and shared decision making.<sup>1</sup> Free programs such as 'Get Healthy' telephonic Health and Wellness Coaching are being promoted and the COACH program in Queensland, are increasing awareness of the need and availability for support even if, at this stage, the information being provided is of a more prescriptive nature than that embraced by Health and Wellness Coaching (Australian Government Department of Health, 2019).

## **Private corporate sector wellness programs have shifted to virtual Health and Wellness Coaching.**

Dr Kenneth R. Pelletier, MD, advised that this sector is more receptive and unequivocally the best place for Health and Wellness Coaches. COVID-19 has accelerated this trend because companies have had to disperse their workforce and find ways to offer wellness programs offsite and in the employee's home. The solution was inter-digitizing Health and Wellness Coaches into a corporate program at home and that is unlikely to change. Health and Wellness Coaches are supporting employees to have a daily routine, concentrate on healthy lifestyle behaviors they can control and supporting them to make positive change, improve their health and build resilience (K. Pelletier, personal communication, November 17, 2020).

Dr Pelletier, believes that:

**"Health and Wellness Coaching is intersectional in the corporate setting. He envisions Health and Wellness Coaching programs located anywhere in the world, providing services to any country where the company has offices. There would be obvious cultural differences in areas such as nutrition, however, basic coaching strategies for dietary changes, weight management, smoking cessation or stress management are universal."**

A recent Health and Wellness Coaching study by WebMD of corporate wellness programs customer outcomes concluded that, *"with proven risk reduction and cost savings, Health and Wellness Coaching has emerged as one of the leading wellness solutions available today. Health and Wellness Coaching offers a true population management solution that engages a broad number of employees, motivates them to make long-term behavioral changes, and contributes to a stronger employer-employee partnership"*.

Telephonic Health and Wellness Coaching to employees, which takes a holistic approach rather than focusing on specific disease or illness, has consistently shown a strong impact on population health. After the coaching program was in effect for one year, employers found impressive results in the key areas of repeatable outcomes and claims-backed cost savings. Health plans claims analysis resulted in a medical claim cost savings of US\$148 per person per year across all risk groups, which translated into US\$575,000 in total annual savings from avoided medical and pharmaceutical claims expenditures (Andalman, 2021).



## **Schools and universities are an emerging setting for health and wellness coaching.**

Gerry Bodeker, Ph.D., who undertook doctoral studies at Harvard with decades of research at Oxford and Columbia University, shared that the notion of Health and Wellness Coaching in schools is growing. Health and Wellness Coaches support students in knowing what their potential is and knowing what the risks are in not managing a life well. Stand-alone coaches and/or teachers being trained in the principles of wellness coaching around behavior change are emerging (Bodeker, 2020).

Research shows that college students are experiencing increased levels of stress and mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression, as well as overwhelming feelings when trying to balance their studies and life. The American College Health Association adds that Health and Wellness Coaching is fairly new, gaining momentum and has potential as an effective approach for improving student well-being and academic achievement in the higher education setting.

Grounded in holistic wellness, Health and Wellness Coaching is an intentional effort to guide students in setting goals that acknowledge the complexity of the behaviors in which they choose to engage and the varying barriers that exist in the collegiate environment. A multi-dimensional model of well-being allows the coaching session to affirm that well-being is dynamic and often exists at the intersection of their identity, the environment in which they live and the behaviors they choose.

Health and Wellness Coaching is part of multidisciplinary services and resources offered to support student mental health and well-being. Coaching is an effective methodology for energizing behavior changes because it concentrates on helping students become more autonomous experts in their own well-being and personal journeys (American College Health Association, 2021).

## **Health and Wellness Coaching is shifting to a hybrid model that scales the profession through technology and group coaching.**

Human face-to-face interaction will remain the core of the coaching engagement to build a trust-based relationship driving sustainable change. However, supportive technology has become critical to scale the profession and address increasing societal demand.

Coaches have integrated video sessions, phone calls and emails for goal setting, motivation, and tracking. With coachee consent, data from fit bits

and tracking devices is also becoming part of health records for ongoing assessment and goal evaluation (K. Pelletier, personal communication, November 17, 2020; Bodecker, G., personal communication, December 19, 2020).

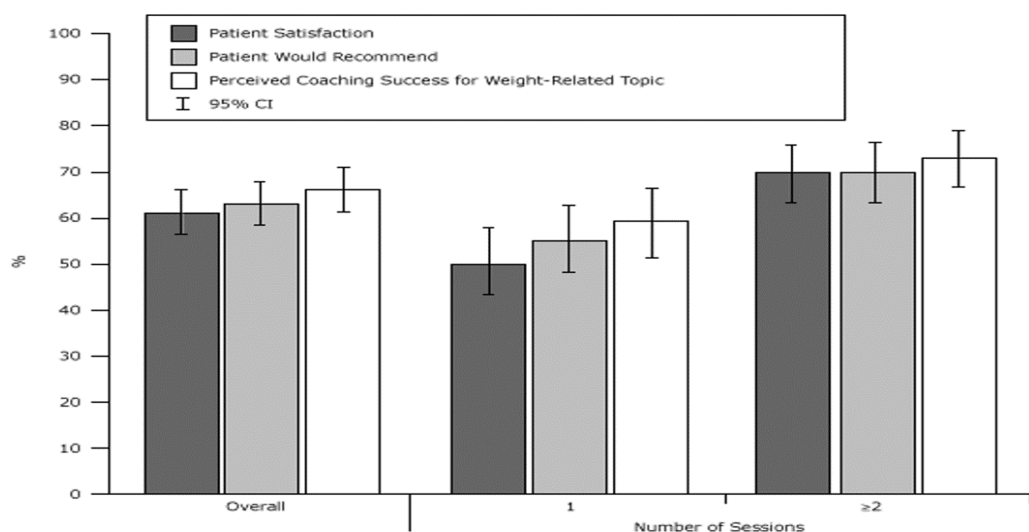
Additionally, apps like Preventia Group and YourCoach are virtually connecting motivated individuals with Health and Wellness Coaches to advance toward their goals.

Community-based, group coaching is on the rise to help address the 'catch-up' demand for health services during COVID-19 and overcome the impact on economies and personal income. In the United Kingdom, due to an overstretched public budget, or by individuals out-of-pocket, group coaching models are becoming an increasingly important approach (Natrins, 2020).

Dr. Elizabeth Markle, in the Evolution of Medicine: Functional Forum, highlights the benefits of facilitating behavior change in a group. Dr. Markle found that group coaching helps democratize Health and Wellness Coaching, while providing shared experiences for individuals to build healthy lifestyle behaviors and overcome health issues. Her work discovered that group visits reward the individual with improved health and community (Functional Forum, 2021).

Similarly, James Maskell's work (2019) on The Community Cure asserts that group and community interventions efficiently keep people healthy and out of the costly medical system. Healing in groups is not only about the transformative experience of participants, but also about how quickly they turn around and help others to better their health. Health and Wellness Coaches, in their educative and supporting role in groups within community, are well-positioned to re-establish healthy, local communities.

**Trend :  
Virtual and  
Group  
Coaching**



**Section 6: What Needs to Happen to Further Establish the Profession to Meet Societal Demand**



## **Section 6: What Needs to Happen to Further Establish the Profession to Meet Societal Demand.**

The most critical factors to further establish the Health and Wellness Coaching profession globally include: the integration of professional Health and Wellness Coaches credentialed by the NBHWC, UKHCA or HCANZA into government supported preventative primary care and community care settings, corporations and schools / universities, a greater understanding of the profession among the general public and adjunct professionals, and evidence-based research at a national level in diverse settings.

### **Change government public health policy reform to integrate Health and Wellness Coaches into preventative care.**

COVID-19 has shone a light on the public health system and need for proactive, personalized prevention and mental wellness programs. In the post-COVID-19 era, government reforms to the public health system are emerging. These reforms are beginning to focus on lifestyle interventions, by a professional Health and Wellness Coach with expertise in lifestyle and behavior change, to strengthen preventative primary care and community care settings (GOV.UK, 2021).

Initial programs provide access for Health and Wellness Coaching as an adjunct modality in preventative primary care, in personalized online coaching for high-risk populations and community group coaching sessions. Ministries of Health are also increasingly promoting a healthy lifestyle through awareness campaigns, online portals and incentives.

While bottom-up approaches can achieve much, the overarching context for fully achieving the potential benefits of Health and Wellness Coaching must be set by the Government at a policy level and the current productive discussions with agencies must continue. The role of the professional Health and Wellness Coach can and should be instrumental to supporting individuals and communities in improving their health and wellness. Working in partnership with other providers, Health and Wellness Coaches play a critical role in supporting people to understand their risks, adopt healthy behavior and make diet and lifestyle choices for improved population health.

## **Integrate credentialed Health and Wellness Coaches into Corporate and School/University wellness programs to support mental well-being among the most vulnerable, post-COVID-19 populations.**

The state of well-being directly impacts employees' performance in the workplace (Haddon, 2018) thus creating an impetus for companies to prioritize workplace health and wellbeing programs. Incorporating Health and Wellness Coaching into employee assistance programs or directly hiring a credentialed Health and Wellness Coach is one way that companies can support employees.

The same impact can be said for schools and universities where there has been an increase in psychological impact from COVID-19 among students (Browning et al., 2021). Health and Wellness Coaches can play an active role in supporting the needs of this vulnerable population, helping to ensure success, and supporting them through high stress and uncertainty.

These offerings can work together with primary care services to support these populations in addressing modifiable lifestyle factors that impact preventable disease. Health and Wellness Coaches credentialed by NBHWC UKHCA, or HCANZA can be scaled in corporations and schools/universities through virtual and group coaching.

## **Increase understanding of the Health and Wellness Coaching profession among the general public and adjunctive professionals through education and awareness campaigns.**

One of the biggest factors limiting the Health and Wellness Coaching profession is a general lack of understanding of what they do, what their role is and what is within their scope of practice. Awareness and education campaigns on the purpose, value and benefits of Health and Wellness Coaching need to reach government bodies and agencies concerned with public and population health, health care professionals, insurers, employers, the education sector, and the general public.

Healthcare professionals would benefit by having a network to refer clients who require the support of a credentialed Health and Wellness Coach. Partnerships with associations who approach care in a holistic manner, such as Lifestyle Medicine, Integrative Medicine and Functional Medicine, are making progress to raise awareness of the Health and Wellness Coaching profession.



Health and Wellness Coach behavior change skills can be valuable to healthcare professionals and applied in two ways: Short-course training with basic skills can help healthcare professionals strengthen their effectiveness in their current role. Alternatively, professionals can continue to complete training for NBHWC, UKHCA or HCANZA credentialing to function as a full-time professional Health and Wellness Coach. These two training approaches can also strengthen the effectiveness of nutritionists, physiotherapists and exercise/fitness professionals in their current role or provide full training to change their professional orientation to offer Health and Wellness Coach services for lifestyle changes with professional credentials.

### **Conduct evidence-based research at a national level in diverse settings.**

Research into the effectiveness of Health and Wellness Coaching is growing at a rapid rate. It is essential for the credibility of the industry that scientific, evidence-based research continues to be conducted in a variety of settings outside clinical practice, where the majority of research has been conducted. As Health and Wellness Coaching is not a medical science that lends itself to double-blind randomized-controlled trials, evidence that informs practice can be collected in a variety of ways. It has been argued that there is value in both empirical evidence and professional wisdom which is made up of experience, knowledge, and judgment of informed practitioners (Grant, 2016).

Better control around education and training of coaches, length, and type of intervention, and pre and post-test measures are important factors when quantitative research is being conducted; yet qualitative research can also contribute to the evidence base. Above all, the 'voice of the practitioner' must continue to be heard.

Studies have found that Health and Wellness Coach trainees experience personal positive change during training that could be specific to the profession (Cosgrove et al., 2021; Lombardo, 2020). This is an area of interest when considering program development and the potential for delivering positive change to both the coachee and the Health and Wellness Coach delivering the service.

## Section 7: Conclusion





## Section 7: Conclusion

Establishing the Health and Wellness Coaching profession globally can help to empower the public to empower themselves to proactively take charge of their own health and well-being. Given the current health climate and pandemic, the focus on lifestyle prevention has never been more important, and Health and Wellness Coaching is recognized as a way to support individuals to make lasting lifestyle and behavior change.

As evidence grows to confirm the value of Health and Wellness Coaching in supporting lifestyle change, reports of where the discipline is being delivered have increased beyond clinical settings to communities, corporations, schools//universities and wellness spas/retreats.

Systemic changes are beginning to integrate Health and Wellness Coaching into new delivery models in preventative primary care, community care settings, global corporation, and school/university wellness programs, through a hybrid coaching model supported by technology that compliments the face-to-face human connection. While supportive technology has become critical to scale the profession, human face-to-face interaction will remain at the core of the coaching engagement to build a trust-based relationship driving sustainable change. As digital health providers offer virtual Health and Wellness Coaching support, they must embed the human factor with empathy by professional coaches, within development of their app-based behavior change protocols.

The most critical factors to further establish the profession globally are: the integration of professional Health and Wellness Coaches credentialed by the NBHWC or UKHCA into government supported preventative primary care and community care settings, corporations and schools/universities; a greater understanding of the role of the profession among the general public and adjunct professionals; evidence-based research at a national level in diverse settings that demonstrates the benefits of Health and Wellness Coaches in improving population health and well-being.

Health and Wellness Coaches are experts on lifestyle and human behavior change – agents of change who fill a critical gap in our global healthcare systems by empowering people to cultivate personal agency, set and achieve health goals and build new health-supportive habits. No other health profession has this unique skill set. This paper highlights what needs to happen for Health and Wellness Coaches to better achieve their potential to meet societal demands globally, by empowering the public to take control in their own health and wellness.

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