

# Revolutionising Expatriate Wellbeing With Social Prescribing And Lifestyle Medicine

In the dynamic world of global business, the health and wellbeing of expatriate employees are key to the success of international assignments. Traditional healthcare models often fall short in addressing the unique challenges faced by expatriates. This is where social prescribing, an innovative healthcare model, combined with the principles of lifestyle medicine, steps in to transform expatriate wellness programmes.

## Understanding Social Prescribing

Social prescribing is an innovative approach to holistic care that addresses the social determinants of health by linking individuals with non-medical support within the community. This model empowers individuals to take control of their health through lifestyle changes and community engagement, moving beyond the confines of conventional medical treatments.

## The Critical Role Of Social Prescribing In Enhancing Assignment Success Rates

### 1. Enhancing Employee Wellbeing:

Expatriates encounter distinct challenges, including cultural adjustments and social isolation, which can impact their mental and physical health. Social prescribing bridges this gap by facilitating connections with community activities and support networks to enhance their overall wellbeing and engagement. This not only improves their quality of life, but also boosts their productivity and success in assignments.

### 2. Managing Chronic Health Conditions:

Tailored support for managing chronic conditions is another cornerstone of social prescribing. Through personalised interventions such as nutrition counselling and stress management programmes, expatriates receive the tools they need to manage their health proactively. This approach not only helps in mitigating health complications, but

also enhances their capacity to succeed in challenging environments.

### 3. Promoting Mental Health and Resilience:

The psychological challenges associated with relocating internationally can be significant, often leading to stress and depression. Social prescribing addresses these issues head-on by providing access to counselling services and mindfulness programmes. These resources play a crucial role in building resilience and facilitating a smoother adjustment to new cultural and social landscapes.

## Synergy With Lifestyle Medicine

Lifestyle medicine, which emphasises the management of health through self-care and healthy lifestyle choices, perfectly complements social prescribing. By promoting nutrition, physical activity, and stress management, lifestyle medicine works hand-in-hand with social prescribing to create a robust framework for expatriate health. This synergy ensures a holistic approach to healthcare that supports sustainable lifestyle changes.

## Implementing Social Prescribing And Lifestyle Medicine In International Benefit Plans

### 1. Collaboration with Healthcare Providers:

Successful implementation begins with forming partnerships with healthcare providers who are proficient in social prescribing and lifestyle medicine. Establishing a network of local resources and community organisations further supports the health of expatriates wherever they are stationed.

### 2. Customisation of Benefit Plans:

Integrating social prescribing elements into benefit plans is essential. Providing access to amenities like fitness facilities and counselling services ensures that expatriates have the resources they need to engage in health-promoting activities.

### 3. Promoting Employee Engagement:

Awareness and participation are key to the success of any health initiative. Developing strategies to educate and engage employees about the benefits of social prescribing and lifestyle medicine can lead to greater participation and enhanced wellbeing.

**4. Evaluation and Adjustment:** Continuously assessing the impact of these health interventions allows for the refinement of strategies based on real-world feedback and data analysis. This iterative process is vital in optimising the effectiveness of the health benefits offered.

The integration of social prescribing and lifestyle medicine into international benefit plans represents a significant advancement in the way organisations support expatriate health. This holistic approach not only addresses immediate medical needs, but also fosters overall health and satisfaction, leading to more successful international assignments and a positive work environment.

By prioritising innovative health strategies such as social prescribing and lifestyle medicine, organisations can achieve higher success rates in their international operations and cultivate a supportive and productive workplace culture.

## References

- *British Society of Lifestyle Medicine (BSLM): Provides insights into the integration of lifestyle medicine with social prescribing.*
- *The King's Fund: Offers a comprehensive overview of social prescribing, its effectiveness, and implementation challenges.*

## DR SHOBA SUBRAMANIAN

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