worksite wellness

Investing In What Works

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IMPROVING EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE – AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE

The health and well-being of your company's workforce is vital to your bottom line. Employees who suffer from preventable chronic diseases miss more work, have higher health care costs, and submit more disability and workers compensation claims than healthy workers. When they are at work they may not be functioning at their best. For this reason, high-performing companies now consider employee health an integral part of their strategies for success and long-term prosperity.

Maintaining and improving employee health is much more than providing health care coverage. Individuals' health is influenced by where they work, live, learn, and play. These environments need to be supportive of healthful actions. The choices we make about our health are not always rational, logical, or based on what is best for us. All of us from time to time have ignored what we know to be good for us, such as quitting smoking, getting more exercise, eating better, getting more sleep, and going to the doctor. When our surroundings make the healthy choice the easy choice, we are more likely to choose health, something everyone wants and is critical for competitive companies.

> *"The wealth of business depends on the health of workers."*
>
> *Dr Maria Neira, Director, Department of Public Health and Environment, World Health Organization*

Businesses that are improving employee health share many of the following essential components:

- Gain management support through engaged **leadership** at all levels who have realistic expectations about how much **time, energy, and resources** will be needed to change a company's health culture;
- Create a cross-divisional **wellness team** to assess employee interests and wellness needs through health and performance data.
- Identify wellness focus through **policies, environments, and operations** that support healthy choices;
- Using all the information gathered **develop an organizational Wellness Plan.** The plan should follow a comprehensive model such as the one on page 2 of this toolkit**.**
- The next step to this continuous cycle is **evaluation of efforts** to assess progress and modify approaches for increased outcomes.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH- HOW SPOKANE REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS

The Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) has launched a new initiative to support and guide businesses that want to create comprehensive, research-based, sustainable worksite wellness initiatives that show positive results.

As the region's local health jurisdiction, SRHD's mission is to "serve as the region's public health leader and partner to protect and improve the community's health."

What makes SRHD's role in worksite wellness unique is that we are not bound to a single wellness product or incentive to make sales. Our commitment is to assist businesses in the process to develop a results-oriented worksite wellness initiative that will **help improve the community's health**.

Investing in What Works
Spokane Regional Health District Wellworks Model

Successful and sustainable worksite wellness initiatives are comprehensive and create a culture of health, where making healthy choices becomes the agency norm.

Spokane Regional Health District's worksite wellness approach includes the following steps:

Engaged Leadership: Business leadership and management staff can support worksite wellness by understanding the business case for their company's culture of health, communicating this to employees, and playing an active role in recruiting for and participating on the company's wellness team.

SRHD's Wellworks initiative assists worksite wellness teams to identify, create and launch customized and sustainable policy, environmental and operational changes. These changes are designed to impact key behavioral risk factors and positively influence the health of all employees.

DEVELOP POLICIES. Policies are written rules that are enforced by management. When coupled with the right corporate practices, they can be very effective in helping businesses work toward greater wellness within the workplace. Policies come in multiple forms, such as contracts, codes of conduct, guidelines, employee handbooks, and performance evaluations.

ADOPT ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES. These types of changes are adjustments within the physical setup of a worksite that make healthy choices easier such as having healthy vending options available. A healthy lunch and stretch break will take care of most afternoon energy slumps.

IMPLEMENT OPERATIONAL CHANGES. This step involves changes to business procedures and practices to implement wellness initiatives. Operational efforts are instrumental to developing consistency and sustainability in worksite practices that reinforce the importance of health. One example is an exercise class waiver to be signed by all employees to cover any and all physical activity classes or clubs that happen during working hours.

Create an Integrated Company Health Profile. This profile will include aggregate employee health data (trends in risk factors and health claims), safety records, turnover and training costs, productivity, absenteeism and wellness survey results. Understanding the company's health profile is an important first step to engaging leadership by making the business case for investing in a culture of health as well as prioritizing policy, environmental and operational changes.

Create wellness activities. These activities will motivate and engage employees to invest in their own health. Wellness activites should address the health, safety and productivity risks identified in the company health profile. As wellness activities are implemented, participation, employee reported behavior changes and biometric health measurements should be evaluated to gauge the effectiveness of a specific wellness activity. Evaluation results over time will help guide the wellness team in what activities are most effective for positive behavior change. Companies may choose to contract with companies that specialize in worksite wellness activities. This guide includes referrals to local Spokane wellness consultants.

This toolkit provides employers a research-based approach for making company-wide, lasting changes to improve employee health. The approach is a systematic process used to make changes in five key areas that contribute to a staggering 70% of health care claims.[2] Real-life case studies of businesses, many of them local, that have taken the steps to develop sustainable wellness efforts are presented. Checklists, tools and resources are included for working through each of the implementation steps that are necessary for workplace-based wellness efforts.

This toolkit contains four sections:

1. **Investing in What Works**, describes a sustainable approach to wellness that creates broad health impacts and sustainable changes through policy, environment and operational changes.

2. **Best Practices to Create Company-Wide Wellness**, presents research-based tools that address five key health areas where SRHD can provide assistance in developing sustainable wellness initiatives. It provides examples of changes other businesses have made in five lifestyle-related health risks using case studies. It also describes resources that businesses may use as they move forward. These topics include:
   - Physical Activity
   - Healthy Eating
   - Tobacco Cessation
   - Breastfeeding
   - Mental Health

3. **Moving to Action** describes each of the steps required to move a business to a successful, sustainable wellness program.

4. **Knowing Success**, describes the best practice approaches to evaluating the success of the wellness program and strategies for creating quality improvements.

This toolkit, in conjunction with one-on-one technical assistance from SRHD that is available to businesses with more than 500 employees in the Spokane area, can assist you in planning a measurable, results-focused wellness initiative that has a higher likelihood of creating positive behavior change among your employees.

2. BEST PRACTICES TO CREATE COMPANY-WIDE WELLNESS

This section of the toolkit describes efforts workplaces can take to influence five lifestyle-related health risks. Each topic discusses:

- The importance of the topic;
- Potential employer benefits for investing in prevention and intervention to address these risks within the worksite;
- Policy, environmental, and operational efforts businesses should consider undertaking when developing programming in these areas;
- Additional tools and resources to assist with developing wellness programming; and
- A case study that describes another business's success in implementing wellness initiatives for each topic.

The five life-style related health risk topics include:

- Physical activity;
- Healthy eating;
- Tobacco prevention and cessation;
- Breastfeeding support; and
- Mental health.

Being physically active can reduce people's risk of many chronic diseases, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, and depression.[3] However, between 60 and 70% of the U.S. population is not currently physically active[4], and at least 30% of Spokane's adults do not exercise as often as is recommended.[5] Today's increasingly sedentary workplace, where many employees sit for hours on end, contributes to this problem. The good news is that big health benefits can occur when people go from being totally inactive to moderately active. The U.S. Surgeon General's current physical activity recommendation is 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least 5 days of the week to maintain health. Studies show that breaking this activity into 10-minute segments is also effective. To improve health or lose weight, the Surgeon General recommends 60 minutes most days of the week. Worksites can help people reach their physical activity goals by making some simple but powerful policy, environmental, and operational changes to encourage people to move more during their work day.

EMPLOYER BENEFITS

Employers benefit when their employees are active and productive employees. Promoting physical activity in the workplace has been shown to have the following benefits:

- Increased productivity;
- Reduced absenteeism and turnover;
- Reduced stress;
- Reduced workplace injuries;
- Reduced worker's compensation costs; and
- Reduced healthcare costs.

INVESTING IN WHAT WORKS

Employers can be instrumental in helping their workers become more physically active. The following are examples of effective policy, environmental, and operational efforts that employers use.

POLICY CHANGES

Written policies to encourage physical activity could include:

- Flexible break times to encourage exercise during the work day for all employees, regardless of duties;
- Creating meeting guidelines that encourage short stretch breaks during meetings lasting more than one hour; and
- Offering discounted memberships to area fitness centers.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Changes to a workplace's physical environment can also be instrumental to promoting physical activity. Some common examples that employers have adopted include:

- Promoting access to safe walking areas outside the workplace;
- Providing secure bicycle parking for employees;

- Providing a workout area for employees as well as a facility for showering and/or locker rooms; and
- Promoting the use of stairs instead of the elevator through signage; and
- Provide standing or walking workstations as alternatives to seated work stations.

Avista Utilities in Spokane, WA, is an example of one local employer that has made significant environmental changes to support physical activity. Avista provides employees with an onsite state-of-the-art workout facility with a large selection of workout equipment. To encourage participation, they also provide onsite showering facilities. And, for employees new to working out, they provide an informal internal social support network to help get them started.

OPERATIONAL CHANGES

Examples of operational changes that support physical activity include:

- Allowing for physical activity breaks during the work day;
- Promoting walking meetings by having managers schedule them; and
- Supporting/promoting physical activity during meetings by including 5-minute physical activity/stretch breaks in meeting agendas.

One example of an operational change for supporting physical activity is seen at the Spokane Regional Health District, which adopted a physical activity waiver process for employees to complete during new employee orientation. The waiver covers employee liability and employee responsibilities when participating in any exercise class held at the health district (Zumba®, yoga, strength training, etc.). This operational change ensured that SHRD is covered for any liability issues while making worksite exercise more convenient for employees by having them complete a waiver just once instead of doing it before each class.

OTHER RESOURCES

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published an online list of effective programs that have shown success in the workplace. More information is available at:

- CDC Worksite Wellness Physical Activity Best Practices, Tools and Resources:
  www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/implementation/topics/physical-activity.html
- CDC Steps to Wellness:
  www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/Steps2Wellness_BROCH14_508_Tag508.pdf#page=34
- This creative You Tube video will convince even the biggest skeptic about why exercise is critical to good health.
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUaInS6HIGo
- Recess at Work Toolkit designed by Keen Corporation: http://recess.keenfootwear.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Keen_CorpToolKit_ALL_Download_11Jun.pdf

CONTACT

For more information or to schedule a meeting, please contact Heleen Dewey, Physical Activity and Healthy Communities Specialist, Spokane Regional Health District 509-324-1555 or hdewey@srhd.org

McKinstry Wellness Center.

McKinstry provides consulting, construction, energy, and facility services. They employ over 1,600 people across the Pacific Northwest. In 2011, they opened a new Spokane campus, the Innovation Center at McKinstry Station, located near the Spokane River in the University District. The Innovation Center is home to McKinstry-Spokane as well as other businesses that occupy the building.

As McKinstry planned the renovation of the building that would house the Innovation Center, one priority was to include a full-service onsite wellness center in the build-out. They also built men's and women's locker rooms with showers and lockers. Promoting physical activity with its employees had always been a priority for McKinstry's management, both in their corporate office and the Spokane campus. Prior to the Innovation Center's completion, the Spokane team had been housed in a rented space in Downtown Spokane. At that time, to encourage staff to exercise, McKinstry had underwritten the cost of gym memberships for Spokane staff. Now that the Innovation Center is complete, employees have access to a full onsite wellness center that includes cardio equipment, weights, mats, and other fitness equipment.

All occupants of the McKinstry Innovation Center are allowed to use the Wellness Center. To protect McKinstry from liability, employees of McKinstry and the tenants' employees are required to sign a waiver if they work in the building, regardless of whether they use the fitness space or not. This operational step allows everyone the flexibility to use the

Wellness Center without putting McKinstry at risk. McKinstry's employee handbook outlines the rules for using the fitness center. A version of this handbook is also distributed to all tenants of the building.

McKinstry's corporate culture values empowering employees to make choices that will work for the success of the company. For this reason, employees are given the flexibility to work with their supervisors to determine whether they may use the Wellness Center during their work hours. All McKinstry employees and tenants' employees receive a badge to enter the Innovation Center outside of normal business hours, during which time they are allowed to access the Wellness Center. One construction manager, who works out of the office, regularly comes to work at 5 a.m. to exercise before he drives to the work site.

McKinstry encourages physical activity in other ways. To support employees who wish to ride their bicycles to work, McKinstry provides indoor secure bike storage. The lockers and showers in the Wellness

McKinstry walking trail to employee kayak launch.

Center allow employees to ride to work and then get ready for the day. They also provide a boat-launch where employees may kayak in and out from the campus, and storage is available indoors. Spokane's Centennial Trail is very close to the Innovation Center, and employees are encouraged to use this walking/jogging path during daylight hours as well.

Another way the company supports physical activity is through the safety awareness update provided on a monthly basis by McKinstry's Safety Director. This short presentation has focused on a variety of topics. Some are specific to operational issues, such as safety on the worksite. However, McKinstry's corporate office develops a monthly schedule of trainings to be implemented at all campuses, and these have included topics such as safe stretching techniques and short physical activity breaks away from the desk to reduce tension and discomfort.

The company also offers its employees and tenants structured group fitness activities. For example, they coordinated with a personal trainer who provided CrossFit-style fitness classes three times per week for six months. To encourage participation among its employees, McKinstry chose to underwrite the cost of this activity. Any of its staff members could participate as often as they liked throughout the six months by paying a one-time $20 fee.

McKinstry's efforts to support physical fitness have resulted in some changes among employees. For example, more employees ride their bicycles to work now that they can use an onsite shower and locker room after arriving to work.

Poor nutrition is linked to several health conditions including obesity. Obesity significantly increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, certain cancers, sleep apnea, liver disease, and high cholesterol. Obesity is also extremely costly: in 2008, medical costs related to obesity for U.S. adults were estimated at $147 million. This figure does not factor in the business cost of reduced worker productivity and chronic absence from work.[6] But studies show that good nutrition can help lower the risk of obesity and other chronic illnesses. Some of the most effective strategies include increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables in place of high-fat, high-sugar foods and decreasing consumption of sugary beverages.

According to researchers in behavioral economics, we all have more than 200 food and beverage-related decisions to make each day. These choices are influenced by knowledge, our personal situation, our social and physical environment, and how food is presented.[7] Most employees spend at least 50% of their waking hours at work each day, eating at least one meal and snack there. This means that employees may make more than 100 food-related decisions when they are at work. Thus, the workplace provides an opportunity to make it easier and more affordable for employees to choose healthy foods and beverages. This overview provides examples of resources that a worksite can use to support healthy foods and beverages through policy, environmental, and operational changes.

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

When people habitually choose healthy foods and beverages, they experience numerous health benefits, such as preventing or reducing their risk of many diseases. Food also affects our energy cycle. Healthy and balanced food choices that emphasize whole foods over processed foods and sugars help employees avoid peaks and valleys in energy brought on by the insulin response. When employees adopt healthier eating habits, businesses can benefit through less absenteeism and increased productivity as well as lower health care costs. Investing in a healthy eating component of a wellness initiative can help your business reap these benefits.

INVESTING IN WHAT WORKS

Employers have the opportunity to create changes that can encourage their employees to choose nutritious foods more consistently. The following are examples of policy, environmental, and operational changes that can lead to positive change.

POLICY CHANGES

Healthy eating policies can help change the health culture of work-sponsored meetings and events, and they can make it easier for your employees to choose healthy foods in the cafeteria and vending machines.

- The Spokane Regional Health District has modified the Washington Department of Health Energize Your Meetings and Events Resource Guide into a policy. As a result, instead of seeing doughnuts at SRHD's early morning community meetings (the norm 10 years ago), healthier options such as fruit, yogurt, healthy baked goods and water are served.
- Developing a food & beverage purchasing policy for vending machines and cafeterias is another example of a healthy eating policy. For example, Sacred Heart Medical Center cafeteria only purchases whole grain buns to serve in its cafeteria.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Environmental changes make healthy food and beverages easy to access.

- The vending machines in the lobby of the Health District used to sell ice cream and soda. The SRHD wellness staff worked with the vending contractor to only include bottled water and 100% fruit juice in the machine and to remove the ice cream machine altogether. The Health District has made a commitment to healthy vending only starting in May 2013.
- Other environmental changes that can affect healthy eating decisions include serving food on smaller plates or offering plated entrees instead of self-serve, all-you-can-eat buffets.
- Avista Utilities' cafeteria has begun labeling select meals with Weight Watchers' points to assist people who are participating in this weight-loss program.
- Sacred Heart offers a farmer's market cart every Friday throughout the local agricultural season to encourage people to purchase fresh, local produce to bring home to their families.

OPERATIONAL CHANGES

Procedural changes can also help support healthy food policies. For example, to uphold a healthy meetings policy, finance staff can review receipts to verify healthy food and beverage options were purchased before they approve reimbursement.

Healthy food options at the Spokane Regional Health District ..

Policies:

- CDC Improving the Food Environment Through Nutrition Standards: A Guide for Government Procurement
www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/dhdsp_procurement_guide.pdf

Meetings and events:

- Energize Your Meetings: http://here.doh.wa.gov/materials/energize-your-meetings/

Vending:

- Fit Pick Vending: www.fitpick.org
- King County Healthy Vending Guidelines: www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/kc_vending_guidelines.pdf
- US General Services Administration Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations: www.gsa.gov/graphics/pbs/Guidelines_for_Federal_Concessions_and_Vending_Operations.pdf

Comprehensive County Policy:

- Santa Clara County Nutrition Standards: www.sccgov.org/sites/sccphd/en-us/Newsandevents/Documents/Nutrition%20Standards/Nutrition_Standards_NEW_july2012_v3.pdf

Program Resources

- American Cancer Association 5 A Day in Worksites-a toolkit for helping to move employees through the stages of change to consuming more fruit and vegetables
http://www.mihealthtools.org/neat/OH5adayGuide_Worksite.pdf
- Garden Market CDC Healthier Worksite Initiative Toolkit
- Step Up and Go Spokane
- Worksite Program California Fit Business Kit
- Healthy Workforce 2010 Partnership for Prevention
- Think your Drink-Dairy Council

CONTACT

For more information or to schedule a meeting, please contact Natalie Tauzin, RD, MPH Nutrition and Healthy Communities Specialist, Spokane Regional Health District 509-324-1659 or ntauzin@srhd.org

Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, Washington, has implemented a variety of policy, operational, and environmental changes to its food services program to ensure healthy food options are available to employees, patients, and visitors through its cafeteria, patient meal program, and catering services. Sacred Heart's cafeteria serves more than 3,500 meals every day, and as a result of the changes, about 75% of cafeteria customers now select healthier options, such as the salad bar or scratch-made vegetarian soups.

Sacred Heart's movement toward healthier food and greener practices began when the Food Services Department chose to sign the Healthy Food Pledge[8] with approval from Sacred Heart's administration. Developed by Health Care Without Harm, this pledge serves as a framework to guide the health care industry in improving the health of patients, communities, and the environment. Hospitals like Sacred Heart that sign the pledge agree to take new steps on an annual basis to model healthy food practices and demonstrate their commitment to local, nutritious, sustainable food.

Providence Sacred Heart Healthy Lunch Options

One significant change implemented after signing the pledge was the movement to using fresh produce. Sacred Heart Food Services created a purchasing policy to eliminate the use of frozen and canned fruits and vegetables, thereby ensuring that the produce they serve is fresh and in-season. To help manage preparation time, their suppliers pre-wash and process the produce. During the spring of 2013, Sacred Heart will further support this policy by creating an environmental change: a new rooftop garden with five raised beds to supplement the produce it gets from its suppliers. This garden is spearheaded by Sacred Heart's Green Team Committee, composed of representatives from many departments such as food service, environmental services, facilities, nursing, and materials management.

Another environmental change is the addition of a new "action station" allowing diners to choose fresh cooked-to-order items giving diners the option to select a healthier preparation such as grilled chicken instead of breaded, fried chicken. And, as a part of the Healthy Food Pledge, Sacred Heart Food Services has recently transitioned from using white, bleached flour buns to whole grain buns for all of its hamburgers and hot sandwiches. The buns are made locally by Snyder's Bakery.

Sacred Heart also prioritizes ways to help its employees eat healthy outside of work. During the Eastern Washington agricultural growing season, Sacred Heart Food Services offers a farmers market cart once a week. Workers are able to purchase these items using their employee badges (an operational change to make purchases easier and more efficient). This program allows them to bring fresh, local, seasonal produce home to their families on Fridays. They can also purchase fresh market items prepared by Food Services, such as granola made from whole rolled oats, nuts, and dried fruits and low in added fat.

Healthy food choices and educational opportunities.

Sacred Heart gauges customer satisfaction among employees through comment cards. Food Services has seen a significant decrease in negative comments as Sacred Heart has continued to offer more healthy options. Sacred Heart has made policy, operational, and environmental changes gradually with buy-in from administration and the collaborative efforts of multiple departments. This comprehensive, supportive approach helps increase the feasibility and sustainability of implementing more changes under the Healthy Food pledge.

Sacred Heart's commitment to health extends beyond its workforce. Providing more nutritious items to patients who are dining in their hospital rooms is another priority of Sacred Heart's food services program, which has implemented an "ambassador program." Ambassadors, a new position at Sacred Heart, work bed-side with patients who do not have sensitive dietary needs (such as renal patients, who are still seen by dieticians rather than ambassadors). Ambassadors help patients understand the available healthy food choices and encourage them to order their preference from that day's menu. This shift has created a significant increase in patient satisfaction scores (from about 20% to 60%).

Sacred Heart's efforts have not been without challenges. With about 80% of its cooking from scratch, Food Services must work hard to ensure perishable items don't go to waste. And, healthier items have a higher price-tag, which means meals are slightly more expensive than traditional cafeteria fare. However, the cafeteria's profit margin remains the same. Sacred Heart's employees and customers have been willing to pay these prices and regularly thank Food Services staff for offering healthier options.

Each year, tobacco use results in 5 million deaths worldwide. Cigarette smoking is still the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S., accounting for approximately one out of every five deaths.[9] In fact, it causes more deaths each year than HIV, illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined. In 2009, nearly 8,000 Washingtonians died from tobacco use.[10] Due to the significant health risks and costs brought about by smoking and secondhand smoke, as well as the need to comply with state law, a good first step for your wellness initiative may be to focus on smoking prevention and cessation through policy, environmental, and operational changes.

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

Smoking has a profound impact on the health of people doing it and the people who are surrounded by it. Tobacco smoke damages blood vessels and leads to higher risk of heart attacks, strokes, and aneurysms.[11] People who use tobacco have higher medical costs than those who don't, estimated at nearly $3,000 more per year. Tobacco users are also hospitalized at least twice as often as non-users. In addition, tobacco use such as cigarette smoking can lead to lower productivity due to cigarette breaks and absenteeism due to illness or asthma. In fact, one study estimates that tobacco use costs employers in the U.S. a staggering $196 billion per year in excess medical costs and lost productivity. On average, this equates to $3.79 per hour per each full-time employee who smokes (or $7,874 per year).[12]

INVESTING IN WHAT WORKS

Employers can help their employees quit tobacco use or significantly reduce it through policy, environmental, and operational changes. These efforts can also protect the health of employees and visitors who do not use tobacco by reducing the effects of secondhand smoke.

POLICY CHANGES

Policy making can be customized in various ways, it doesn't have to be an "all or nothing" rule. Having a customized policy allows businesses to directly meet their need to promote a healthier worksite. Because Washington State law prohibits smoking indoors in public places and within 25 feet of doors, windows, and ventilation intakes, all businesses must adhere to the legal requirements outlined in the law. Some organizations are using their legal right to develop more stringent policies to better protect the health of all workers and to encourage quitting. Some organizations are moving to smoke-free or tobacco-free campuses, which prohibit smoking or tobacco use anywhere on the company's campus, including outdoors. Examples include:

- Washington State University's Spokane campus, where the use or sale of tobacco products anywhere on the premises, including bus stops, streets, or sidewalks with the WSU Riverpoint campus is prohibited by policy.

- The Spokane County Courthouse campus, where smoking is allowed in designated smoking areas only and employees are prohibited from smoking in all county vehicles and equipment.

- YMCA of the Inland Northwest, where child care workers follow policies to prevent exposing the children to third-hand smoke. (Inhaling tobacco smoke from clothing, hair, etc.)

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Environmental changes help improve air quality and increase education and awareness about the policy. For example, environmental changes identify where first, second, and third-hand smoke are and how to provide solutions to ultimately clear the air. Understanding risk management and ensuring all safety measures and operations is a sure way and a great place to start in reducing risks. Changing the workplace environment to support tobacco-free policies helps employees create a healthier worksite and personally reduce environmental work hazards. Suggested environmental changes are listed below.

- Add more signage than required by law.
- Stencil "NO SMOKING" on outdoor benches and staircases.
- Create a designated smoking area. Comply with regulatory agencies such as Fire and City Code. For example, a designated smoking area may not be enclosed.
- Assess all ventilation intakes, gas lines or pumps, electrical, and parking lots where high vehicle traffic is, before choosing a designated smoking area. Some premises do not have 25 feet of area to permit a designated area. If this is the case, you cannot permit smoking.
- Move ashtrays more than 25 feet from door.
- If smokers are using a beautification area such as a flower pot or landscape area for cigarette disposal, add signage to tell them where they may dispose of their waste. Signs should also communicate your policy or guideline.
- Add signage to disposal cans to encourage proper disposal and reduce litter.
- If you have a decorative retaining wall or raised flower bed, consider adding small fencing to discourage patrons from sitting on retaining wall. For example, Spokane's historic Davenport Hotel added black iron fencing around its flower beds to discourage smokers from sitting on them and smoking in front of the hotel.

OPERATIONAL CHANGES

Operational changes help promote and enforce tobacco-free policies and lead to healthier workplaces. Examples of operational changes are listed below.

- If your business's smoking/tobacco policy supersedes the law, remove your RCW 70.160 Smoking in Public Places Signage and prominently post signs that describe your policy. Post more signs than required by the law.
- Include updated policy language in all communication areas such as agency website, human resource information, email, pay stubs, emergency plans, information desks, voicemail, and updates.
- Train management and employees in consistent approaches for enforcing your policy.
- Spokane Transit Authority added no smoking policy language to their code of conduct for transit users to create an enforceable healthier environment for all transit users and employees.
- The Community College of Spokane created an operational change allowing them to fine people violating their smoke-free campus policy. Through this change, a student violator must pay the fine before they can receive their college transcripts.
- The Spokane Regional Health District implemented changes to the new client packets distributed to clients of its Opioid Treatment Program. Now, clients are instructed that they may only smoke in designated smoking areas and, if they do not comply, they can be denied services.

- www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/tobacco/implementation.htm#Environment
- www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/QuitSmoking/QuittingResources/Resources-for-Quitting-Smoking_UCM_307934_Article.jsp
- www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/smoke-freecommunities/createasmoke-freeworkplace/smoking-in-the-workplace-a-model-policy
- www.ok.gov/strongandhealthy/documents/HWF%20GUIDELINES%20WEB.pdf
- www.globalsmokefreepartnership.org/ficheiro/115+.pdf
- www.mihealthtools.org/work/100_PERCENT_SMOKEFREE_POLICY.PDF
- www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/smoke-freecommunities/createasmoke-freeworkplace/smoking-in-the-workplace-a-model-policy

CONTACT

For more information or to schedule a meeting, please contact Krista Panerio, Tobacco Prevention and Healthy Communities Specialist, Spokane Regional Health District 509-324-1502 or kpanerio@srhd.org

TRAVIS PATTERN AND FOUNDRY CREATES SMOKE FREE CAMPUS, DECREASES FIRE RISKS AND HELPS EMPLOYEES QUIT AND SMOKE LESS

In 2005 Washingtonians passed an initiative banning indoor smoking in all public places. Spokane Regional Health District is the enforcement agency for the law in Spokane County. In early December 2010, the health district received a complaint about smoking indoors at Travis Pattern and Foundry. The Foundry, which is the largest privately owned provider of aluminum castings west of the Mississippi, began to experience challenges in complying with the law even though they had always had a policy prohibiting smoking indoors. The environment of a foundry is hot, dirty, and smelly with a lot of private places. The employees work in three shifts around the clock, which made it difficult for supervisors to enforce the law, as some of their 400 employees sought out hidden corners indoors where they would smoke cigarettes. In addition, trash can fires occurred occasionally from improper disposal of cigarettes.

The Spokane Regional Health District's Tobacco Enforcement staff visited the foundry to inspect the premises. In visits on two occasions, no one was caught smoking. However, after further complaint, the SRHD Tobacco Enforcement staff suggested assisting them to develop policy, environmental, and operational changes. These would allow them to follow and enforce the law and create a cleaner, safer workplace for all of its employees while avoiding fines and fees associated with further inspections.

Travis Pattern and Foundry opted to craft a policy that would make its entire campus smoke-free, meaning that neither employees nor visitors are allowed to smoke anywhere indoors or outdoors on its grounds. As it prepared to implement the new policy, leadership met with the union VP and union officials to gain their support. The union agreed that everyone needed to comply with the law, and getting its buy-in helped increase educational efforts to the union staff members.

Next, leadership met with shift supervisors and foremen to describe the new policy and ensure they understood how to comply with and enforce it. To educate employees, leadership convened meetings with each department to review the new policy. Leadership gave employees specific information about the law to help them understand the reason for the smoke-free campus. All employees were told they would be written up if caught smoking anywhere on company property, and each of them signed paperwork stating they had read the policy.

Early in the policy's implementation, leadership installed video cameras to better monitor hidden areas of the foundry, and a few workers were caught smoking indoors. They were immediately written up, and word spread very quickly that management was serious about enforcing the policy. They had no more problems with compliance, and no one was terminated. Today, new employees are notified of the policy during their orientation to ensure ongoing compliance.

Leadership also felt that it was important to create some environmental changes to make following the policy easier for employees. It began by removing ashtrays from the entrances to the building. It hung signage indicating that the entire campus was smoke-free. And leadership worked with the owners of the adjoining property to identify a secluded area where they could put picnic tables and ashtrays for those employees who wished to smoke on lunch breaks but did not want to sit in their cars.

At the time the policy was passed, at least 70% of Travis Pattern and Foundry's employees were smokers. This number remains high today, with approximately 60% of employees smoking. However, the number of cigarettes they smoke throughout the day has greatly decreased since now they may only smoke in their cars or off-campus over the lunch

break. In addition, the indoor environment is now much safer and cleaner because no one is smoking in the bathroom or in other hidden areas of the building and garbage can fires are no longer an issue.

WORKSITE BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

According to the CDC, approximately 70% of mothers with children under the age of three work full time. One-third of mothers return to work within three months of giving birth, and two-thirds return to work within six months.[13] Although extensive medical, cultural, and health studies demonstrate that breastfeeding is the preferred method of infant feeding worldwide, women who are employed full-time are significantly less likely to initiate breastfeeding and continue breastfeeding once they have returned to work. **The Affordable Care Act requires employers with 50 or more employees to provide non-exempt employees who are breastfeeding breaks and a private place to nurse or express milk for up to one year after the birth of their child**.[14]

EMPLOYER BENEFITS

Supporting breastfeeding in the workplace offers numerous benefits to employers. Breastfeeding has been shown to mitigate health care costs, productivity loss, and absenteeism.[15] Breastfeeding can also benefit employers in the following ways:

- Breastfeeding increases the short- and long-term health benefits for both mothers and babies, thereby improving the overall health of the work staff;[16]
- Breastfeeding decreases the rate of employee turnover because of maternity leave;[17]
- Breastfeeding improves infant health and leads to fewer employee absences related to caring for ill children;[18] and
- Breastfeeding support promotes a positive company image within the community and can affect recruiting and retaining valuable employees.[19]

INVESTING IN WHAT WORKS

Employers can implement policy, environmental, and operational changes to enable the continuation of breastfeeding among interested mothers. Lactation support programs for employees can be tailored to the company's needs, outlining both the company and employee responsibilities. The following are examples of policy, environmental, and operational changes that have worked for employers.

POLICY EXAMPLES

- The Washington State Department of Health and the Spokane Regional Health District have each created a written policy officially defining how they will support breastfeeding mothers, including guidelines for bringing infants to the workplace. These policies create clarity for employees and employers and sustainability for this commitment.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMPLES

- CIGNA, a global health service company in Philadelphia, Penn., provides flexible scheduling options for milk expression needs during regular break times.
- In Spokane, Gonzaga University has created a lactation room to provide breastfeeding mothers a private place to breastfeed and pump.
- The Spokane Regional Health District also provides a lactation room equipped with a pump, changing table, wipes, and storage refrigerator.

OPERATIONAL EXAMPLES

- Kaiser Permanente, the nation's largest nonprofit health plan, has implemented an internal communication platform that provides new mothers with a forum to share advice, ask questions, and seek support.
- Texas Instruments, headquartered in Dallas, Texas, has an internal employee website that promotes its breastfeeding support program.
- Locally, the Spokane Regional Health District works to educate all new staff about the company's breastfeeding support and policy by reviewing the employee benefits summary sheet during new-hire orientation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY EMPLOYER CHECKLIST: This checklist provides an overview of several options employers can use to support their breastfeeding employees. It is available at www.breastfeedingwa.org/files/BCW_Breastfeeding-Friendly-Employer-Checklist.pdf
- INVESTING IN WORKPLACE BREASTFEEDING PROGRAMS AND POLICIES: This 71-page toolkit offers multiple resources to help employers get started on a successful lactation program. It is available for download at www.businessgrouphealth.org/healthtopics/breastfeeding/docs/BF_entire_toolkit_FINAL.pdf
- THE BREASTFEEDING COALITION OF WASHINGTON: This statewide coalition works to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding as a vital part of health and development of children and families. Its website offers an array of resources, including guidelines for storing milk that can be posted in a lactation room. Visit www.breastfeedingwa.org for more information.
- THE BUSINESS CASE FOR BREASTFEEDING: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health has developed a comprehensive program to educate employers about supporting breastfeeding in the workplace. More information can be found at www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/government-in-action/business-case-for-breastfeeding/index.cfm

CONTACT

For more information or to schedule a meeting, please contact Deanna Koczor, Registered Dietitian for WIC, Spokane Regional Health District 509-323-1628 or dkoczor@srhd.org

Implementing a lactation program to support breastfeeding employees has been shown to have a positive impact on employee productivity and turnover rates. In 2010, the Spokane Regional Health District collaborated with the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program housed onsite to review the organization's current breastfeeding policies and to create environmental and operational changes to better support its breastfeeding employees.

A WIC employee was selected to spearhead efforts to form a breastfeeding task force. Five additional employees from different departments within the health district chose to participate. The task force met approximately once per month for six months to review the existing policy, make recommendations for policy changes, explore the feasibility of a lactation room, and mobilize additional resources to support a lactation program.

Employee breastfeeding room at Spokane Regional Health District

They began by reviewing the existing breastfeeding policy, which at the time combined SRHD's bring-your-infant-to-work policy with breastfeeding policy. This original policy allowed breastfeeding mothers to bring their infants to work (with supervisor approval) for the first six months after the child's birth. Through policy review and recommendations, SRHD's HR staff chose to create two separate policies. First, they developed a stand-alone bring-your-infant-to-work policy. The new policy still allows breastfeeding mothers to bring their infants to work for six months with supervisory approval. To make the policy more inclusive, they also included language allowing non-breastfeeding parents to bring their infants to work for a three-month time period. The revised breastfeeding policy incorporated guidelines for the use of a lactation room that the task force created.

As the group began to explore the possibility of creating a lactation room that would accommodate nursing mothers, it identified a private room with a locking door and got approval to transform the room. It set up the room with comfortable seating, a mini refrigerator, milk storage bags, a breast pump, a baby changing table, and baby wipes.

"The family-friendly policies at the Spokane Regional Health District have enhanced my professional and personal life. Having the opportunity to bring my baby to work to bond and breastfeed was priceless. I was able to breastfeed for an extended period of time and consequently had very few missed days of work due to illness. Policies such as these make me feel valued as a female and as an employee. They also help make the decision to return to work a little easier and in turn, the agency retains trained, devoted staff."

Jennifer Hansen
Health Program Specialist 3, Neighborhoods Matter Program
Spokane Regional Health District

One feature that is unique to SRHD's lactation program is that it offers breastfeeding consultation to employees through the board-certified lactation consultants who work onsite in the WIC office. Information about this service is publicized in the lactation room and communicated to new employees during orientation.

To promote the new lactation program and the policy change, HR staff members presented information at SRHD management meetings and in district-wide publications. They incorporated information about the lactation program, breastfeeding policy, and bring-your-infant-to-work policy into the new-employee orientation process. They will incorporate these policies into the employee handbook during the next revision. At this time, employees can review the policies on the organization's Intranet.

Another effort to promote this new resource was a grand opening celebration for the lactation room. This event was announced via the employee Intranet. Today, SRHD's lactation program is a model program for accommodating nursing mothers in order to help support their ability to come back to work after giving birth and continue breastfeeding their babies.

Common mental health issues such as stress, depression, anxiety, and substance abuse are incredibly costly problems in the workplace. For example, according to the CDC, stress is a significant cause of missed work. In addition, anxiety, stress, and other disorders "are more severe than the average injury or illness. Affected workers experience a much greater work loss than those with all nonfatal injuries or illnesses—25 days away from work compared with 6 in 2001."[20] Stress is also linked to numerous health problems, including the six leading causes of death in the U.S.: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide. It is also linked to obesity.[21]

Through health benefits packages and employee assistance plans (EAP), many employers help employees access important therapeutic services that can address mental health needs with a licensed professional. However, employers can also be instrumental in creating a corporate climate that supports positive mental health by implementing policy, environmental, and operational changes that can help reduce stress and other mental health issues.

EMPLOYER BENEFITS

- According to the American Psychological Association (APA), on-the-job stress is estimated to cost U.S. industry more than $300 billion each year due to absenteeism, turnover, and decreased productivity as well as medical, legal, and insurance costs.[22]
- The APA also reports that health care costs for employees with high levels of stress are 46% higher than for their lower-stress counterparts.
- Health care costs for people suffering from depression are 70% higher than those who are not.[23]

INVESTING IN WHAT WORKS

Research has revealed a relationship between the number of incidents of traumatic life experiences and subsequent adult mental health issues including substance abuse, other risky behaviors, health, and social problems (Felitti et al, 1998). Employees past life experiences and current mental health should be addressed in current worksite wellness programs in order to create policies and operational approaches that support building employee resiliency and healing. By addressing these issues and supporting employees the organization can improve employee health, reduce turnover, increase productivity, and decrease health care costs and sick days.

Discussing mental health issues can be difficult or uncomfortable, especially when the conversation turns to suicide prevention and intervention. However, employers are in a unique position to communicate about mental health, including stress, anxiety, depression, and suicide because they have communications systems in place for reaching out to employees. Policy, environmental, and operational changes can help support sustainable interventions in the workplace, ensure that employees get the help they need before it is too late, and reduce stress. The following are examples of efforts that have worked for other employers.

POLICY

Worksite policies for issues such as problem resolution benefit both employees and management since they establish a clear, safe and solution-focused communication process. This example sets the tone for a positive work environment and lists informal and formal conflict resolution and complaints procedures. **Problem Resolution - National Organization**

Other effective stress management policies help employees and management accurately recognize behaviors and risk factors and assist people in getting the help they need. The goal of this policy is to intervene with people before their thoughts turn to suicide.

ENVIRONMENT

Workplace settings can allow for environmental changes that can alleviate stress, depression, and preoccupation with suicide. For example, the Spokane Regional Health District has purchased full-spectrum light bulbs that employees can use to help decrease the symptoms of seasonal affective disorder. Other examples include:

- Implementing a chair massage workplace wellness program, which has been shown to reduce anxiety and increase mental alertness;[24]
- Encouraging regular exercise by investing in wellness initiatives focused on physical activity (see physical activity section of this toolkit); and
- Creating a private, tranquil space where employees may step away from their desk and spend a few minutes breathing, stretching, or meditating.

OPERATIONAL

A healthy workplace addresses workplace stress by considering the physical, emotional, intellectual and mental health of employees with a goal of supporting employees in creating balance between workplace responsibilities and personal, family and community responsibilities. Wellness promotion does not just benefit individuals; organizations with healthy cultures are productive workplaces that attract, retain and motivate healthy employees.

Below is an example of an approach to establishing diverse and inclusive workplaces. Ensuring that the workplace is reflective of the community and clients that the organization serves is part of creating a healthy workplace. Download this Standards Theme as a PDF

Spokane County lunch time worksite yoga

Operational changes also include a variety of training opportunities for managers and other employees who have the capacity to serve as "gatekeepers" for their coworkers because they encounter a large number of employees in their day-to-day tasks (such as reception staff).

Many research-based trainings, such as those listed below, are focused on suicide prevention. However, the skills these trainings impart are valuable to other mental health issues because they teach trainees how to ask questions in a kind, supportive, and sensitive manner. They also help trainees recognize the types of responses that imply high risk and refer their colleagues for intervention as needed.

Train key employees in the suicide prevention response plan.

- The Washington State Department of Transportation purchased 50 one-hour, online QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) trainings for site superintendents and supervisors. Participants reported that the online training improved their understanding of suicide prevention approaches and their understanding of how to talk to someone they think is troubled.
- Avista Utilities also trained management and HR staff in QPR, and participants reported the same results expressed by DOT participants.
- Spokane County 911 operators have completed Applied Suicide Intervention Strategies Training (ASIST), another nationally recognized suicide prevention training.[25]

The Hidden Costs of Trauma in the Workplace. This article explains the need for organizations to be aware that trauma impacts every aspect of an employee's productivity and emotional well-being. There are many other links on website surrounding worksite wellness, stress and its cost.
www.humannatureatwork.com/articles/workplace_stress/Workplace-Stress-3.htm

Workplaces That Work. This website has a toolkit and sample Human Resources policies that focus on employee's mental health and job satisfaction. http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/workplaces-health-safety.cfm

Workplace Safety Toolkit. This toolkit focuses on resources and tips to mitigate workplace stress and the negative effects it has on employees. www.nonprofitrisk.org/tools/workplace-safety/public-sector/topics/ws/stress-ps.htm

SRHD recommends suicide prevention training in the workplace to equip staff with information and knowledge to recognize suicide risk and help a troubled peer. These trainings include the following options.

- One-hour online training in QPR, a best practice technique, for all employees. Provides skills for managers and co-workers to address concerns when signs of stress are observed.
- Workplaces that assist high risk clients, HR staff, and upper-level management may opt for local 2-day Applied Suicide Intervention Strategies Training (ASIST).
- The Suicide Prevention Toolkit developed by Working Minds http://workingminds.org/mentalhealth.html
- What is the single most important thing you can do for your stress:
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6402QJp52M

For more information or to schedule a training, contact AJ Sanders asanders@srhd.org or (509) 324-1596.

Implementing a successful, effective worksite wellness initiative that will have a high likelihood to improve workers' health status and your business's bottom line requires a commitment of time and resources. Several important steps will work together to create an initiative that responds to your organization's unique workforce, physical environment, and wellness needs. These steps include:

- Gain management support;
- Create a wellness team;
- Collect data to assess needs and interests;
- Identify wellness focus; policy, environmental, and operational changes; and wellness activities;
- Develop and implement a wellness plan; and
- Evaluate and report on results.

This section of the toolkit outlines the most effective process for completing these steps.

STEP 1. GAIN MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Buy-in from your organization's leadership is a vital first step to launching an effective wellness initiative. In fact, according to WELCOA, without support from executive-level management, a wellness initiative is significantly less likely to succeed.

Organizational leaders are in a unique position to influence an organization's commitment to wellness by allocating time, staffing, and budget to a wellness initiative. Leaders can have a substantial impact on employee's participation by serving as a role model for healthy behaviors and engaging in your company's wellness activities.

The following steps are recommended for gaining management support:

"We know of very few programs that have contained costs and improved employee health that didn't have strong senior level support.

WELCOA (The Wellness Coalition of America)

- Review business data such as health care cost and disease trends, safety records, absenteeism, and turnover rates to help prepare the business case for wellness.
- Talk with the CEO about the business case for wellness and gain his/her personal perspective and support. Talking with other CEOs can also help demonstrate that similar companies have seen a positive return on investment.
- Work with the CEO to develop written communications that promote the importance of wellness.
- Identify other business leaders who may need to be influenced to achieve a full commitment to wellness (e.g., CFO, HR Manager, union council, Board of Directors).
- Assist the CEO in creating a wellness presentation that demonstrates the organization's commitment to wellness and present to business leaders and staff.
- Communicate with the CEO to promote the importance of assigning staffing, space, time, and programming resources for wellness.
  - According to a leading expert on return on investment (ROI), the ideal financial investment towards wellness programming is between $100 and $150 annually for each employee eligible to participate.[26]
  - According to WELCOA, this level of investment can yield a return ranging from 3:1 to 16:1.[27]
- Encourage the CEO to delegate a wellness team. The most effective team is one with formal responsibilities (rather than a volunteer team).
- Develop a role-modeling plan so the CEO can act as a model and champion for wellness. The plan should have the following three components.

  1. Work with your CEO to develop an individual wellness plan that will help him/her develop a personal health plan.
  2. Ensure the CEO participates in organizational wellness activities.
  3. Get your CEO involved with community-based health and wellness activities.

A wellness team is a vital component of a sustainable wellness initiative. Delegating a diverse team of people from different departments with different skills and expertise in different organizational roles (senior management, middle management, front-line) is a key step to launching your results-oriented wellness initiative. Doing so increases the relevance of the wellness initiative to all parts of the organization because this team can represent the voice of the employees they supervise or work closely with. Another reason the team approach is so important is that if all responsibility for wellness is delegated to a single staff member, the program risks interruption or discontinuation if that employee is reassigned or leaves the organization.

The following activities will result in the most effective wellness team.

- **COMPOSE A LONG-TERM TEAM.** Organizations that are most successful in institutionalizing wellness are those with wellness teams that are in place for years. Appointing members to serve for at least a two-year term, but preferably three to five years, is best. Identify roles, time commitment, and expectations up front.

- **CONSIDER THE SIZE OF YOUR TEAM.** An ideal team size is from 9 to 15 members.

- **ENSURE DIVERSE ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATION.** Your team should include senior-level management, middle management, front line, and clerical workers. But it should also include people from a broad array of departments, such as HR, IT, finance, communications, occupational health, and safety. Health status, race, ethnicity, age, and education are also important to consider assuring interventions will be effective and appropriate for all employees.

- **APPOINT A TEAM LEADER TO ENSURE IT IS WELL ORGANIZED.** The best leader is someone with experience in group facilitation, health and/or safety and who reports directly to senior-level management. Or, the person may be a front-line staff member who is given special reporting authority to senior-level management for this task.

- **CHARGE THE TEAM WITH THE RESPONSIBILITIES THAT WILL LEAD TO A SUCCESSFUL WELLNESS INITIATIVE.** These should include data collection, planning, program development, policy recommendations, environmental changes, and evaluation. Training or assistance may be helpful in assessing potential policy and environmental opportunities. Most organizations only do programs, whereas the policy and environmental changes will often have the most far reaching and lasting impact on employee wellness.

- **CREATE A MEETING SCHEDULE.** Meet at least six times per year but, preferably, monthly. Identify time commitment for each member of the team up front.

- **RUN EFFECTIVE MEETINGS USING A MEETING AGENDA.** Develop and adhere to an agenda with roles and responsibilities for each meeting to ensure meetings remain on task and continue to move the wellness initiative forward.

- **COMMUNICATE.** Agree upon communications protocols in between meetings to continue the progress achieved in meetings. Communicate results of assessments, plans, implementation, evaluations and successes to management and staff throughout the process.

Collecting data before launching a new wellness initiative is vital for success. This step helps the wellness team plan and develop the wellness activities that are most likely to resonate with an organization's staff. It also helps the team identify the policy, environmental, and operational efforts that should be considered to support and sustain these wellness activities. Data collection will help the team develop a wellness initiative that has the capability of containing costs and improving employee health.

The wellness team should gather organizational, employee health, physical environment, and employee protection and productivity data, as outlined in the bullets below. Two assessment instruments that can be useful in collecting data are presented in the Appendices of this proposal:

- Worksite Wellness Policy, Environment, and Operations Assessment (Appendix A); and
- Employee Health Risk Appraisal (Appendix B).

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA (GATHERED AND ANALYZED EVERY 12 TO 24 MONTHS)

- Gather demographic data of your organization's workforce (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity).
- Review modifiable health claims data to identify the amount of preventable health care dollars your organization spends annually.
- Conduct a corporate wellness score card to obtain a better perspective of your organization's health norms and values. (Appendix C)
- Review employee productivity, presenteeism, and engagement to better understand how much your organization is losing in terms of poor productivity or unhappy workers.

EMPLOYEE DATA

- Conduct a health interest survey to better understand the types of wellness activities or programs your employees would be most interested in.
- Have employees complete a health risk appraisal to gather population-based health data, inform employees of their health status, and gather health knowledge data to better understand what your employees know about their overall health and well-being.
- Gather health screening information such as blood pressure or cholesterol to gain insight on overall employee health risk profile.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

- Assess employees in their work stations to determine if they are ergonomically protected. Review heating, cooling, and ventilation systems, safety, and lighting.
- Examine your organization's existing benefits plan to see if health promotion is supported.
- Review data regarding your organization's physical environment and how it can promote healthy choices, such as no smoking signs around the exterior of the building, healthy options in the cafeteria and vending machines, well lit and safe stairwells, and physical activity centers.

EMPLOYEE PROTECTION AND PRODUCTIVITY DATA (GATHERED EVERY 12 TO 36 MONTHS)

- Review company-wide employee absenteeism and turnover trends.
- Analyze disability claims over the past 12 to 24 to 36 months.
- Examine worksite incident and injury data.
- Review workers' compensation claims.
- Measure productivity

The focus of your wellness initiative should be driven by the data you collect in Step 3. Participation and participant satisfaction will be highest if your wellness initiative responds to organizational needs and employee interests. You will also have the most success in improving employees' health status if you take a data-driven approach. The ultimate health goal of any wellness initiative should be to keep healthy employees healthy; move at-risk employees back toward health; and support unhealthy employees to stop the progression and, ideally, move them back toward health.

If your organization has not addressed wellness in the past or has had little success in making the results-oriented changes you wish to achieve, starting small with a pilot project will be more effective. However, it's vital that you prepare to implement pilot programming by first making the other changes that are necessary to sustain the program. For example, if your business wants to promote physical activity by implementing a campaign encouraging people to take the stairs, it is important to consider the safety and security issues that could cause you to abruptly discontinue the campaign. Working with your organization's Safety Officer and Facilities & Maintenance department will help you identify and address potential concerns before you publicize and launch the campaign.

When identifying the health promoting activities you will implement, your wellness team should take the following steps.

- IDENTIFY YOUR ORGANIZATION'S WELLNESS FOCUS. Rather than trying to address all wellness needs simultaneously, you will find longer term success if you scope your initiative appropriately. One effective practice is to select your focus based on the cumulative results of your employees' health risk assessment and their interests. For example, if obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol are issues, perhaps in the first year of your initiative, you will choose to focus on physical activity interventions because they can address these risks. The staff may be most excited about a walking group or onsite exercise classes or discounts at local gyms.

- IDENTIFY THE CHANGES THAT WILL SUPPORT YOUR WELLNESS INITIATIVE. Think about what environmental, policy, or operational changes will support your wellness focus. For a business that predominantly employs women of childbearing age, it is important to encourage these mothers to keep their infants and themselves as healthy as possible. Not only is it the law to accommodate breastfeeding, but it also protects the infant from infections. But to offer an effective lactation program for your employees, you must first identify the environmental changes you must create, such as designating a private, secure space for expressing milk. Or, if your organization wishes to address tobacco use, creating a smoke-free campus requires policy development, communication to employees about the policy, and training to equip management to comply with and enforce the policy.

- DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PILOT WELLNESS PROGRAM. When you first launch wellness activities, it is important to scope them appropriately. Starting small and operating a wellness program for a short time frame, such as six months, is an effective way to identify what is working and what is not. When planning activities, it is also important to consider who is eligible to participate (e.g., employees, their families) and whether you will provide incentives. Sometimes a department manager may be the strongest champion for health. S/he could implement operational and environmental changes for his/her department, pilot a program, and then share results to the whole company later. Starting small also allows you to show success quickly and build momentum.

- REVIEW INITIAL RESULTS. Using an evaluation plan, review the results of your pilot program, and make adjustments as needed. Most businesses conducting wellness activities neglect this step, but it is the most valuable approach for communicating results to upper management. These objective numbers also strengthen the business case for continuing the investment in wellness.

The wellness plan is a written document that articulates the vision, mission, goals, measurable objectives, roles and responsibilities, timeline, budget, communications strategies, and evaluation procedures for your wellness initiative. This planning process is paramount to the success of the initiative. It ensures that the wellness team moves in the same direction to accomplish a shared vision. The plan also empowers the team to accomplish the tasks that will lead to your desired wellness outcomes. It is also an important tool for communicating with senior executives. Moreover, it ensures that the wellness team's efforts are sustainable in the event of turnover.

The following are the recommended components of an organizational wellness plan.

1. VISION AND MISSION FOR THE WELLNESS INITIATIVE

This one- to two-sentence statement communicates your organization's overarching plan for what the wellness initiative will accomplish.

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives serve as the building blocks for your organization's wellness initiative. A goal is a broad statement of purpose, identifying what you want to achieve in specific areas. Objectives should be "SMART": **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound statements. These clear goals and objectives will form the basis for your evaluation plan because they will articulate the specific short-, mid-, and long-term results you intend to achieve with your initiative. Goals and objectives should focus on **what** you want to achieve, rather than **how** you will achieve it.

3. TASKS AND TIMELINES

This section of the plan describes the activities that must be conducted, with benchmarks for success, and the timeframe for completing them. This element of the plan will help hold your team accountable and ensure you continue to progress toward implementation. It describes how you will achieve your goals and objectives. The following shows a sample goal, objective, and activities for a pilot exercise program.

Goal: Increase opportunities for employees to be physically active during the work day.

Objective 1: During a six-month pilot program, at least 75 employees will participate in a 30-minute group exercise class two times per week, as measured by attendance logs.

Objective 2: By the end of six months, at least 50% of employees participating in a 30-minute group exercise class two times per week will self-report a decrease in stress levels, as measured by pre- and post-surveys.

Activities:

- Identify a safe, private space for exercise classes.
- Purchase mirrors and exercise equipment to transform the room into a group exercise space.
- Identify and hire a certified exercise instructor.
- Create an exercise waiver to be signed by all participants.
- Develop sign-in sheets to track attendance

- Develop a pre- and post-survey to measure participant outcomes.
- Create the class schedule.
- Communicate to employees about this new opportunity.
- Implement classes, including having all new participants complete a survey before or immediately after their first class.
- Have participants complete a survey at the end of six months.
- Review and analyze attendance logs and survey results.
- Make quality improvements as necessary, based on attendance and participant feedback.
- Communicate results and quality improvement measures to upper management.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section of the plan describes the specific roles and responsibilities for each wellness team member. It ensures that the tasks identified in the timeline are assigned to the right team member with each activity.

5. LINE-ITEM BUDGET

The budget is vital to your plan because it identifies the hard costs attached to each element of the wellness activity, including wellness assessments, environmental modifications, equipment purchases, communications, and incentives. The plan should also include estimated soft costs, such as staff time to implement the initiative, time for employees to participate in wellness activities, and ongoing evaluation and quality improvement activities.

6. MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

This element of the plan provides an opportunity for the wellness team to consider how they will promote the wellness initiative and communicate about it on a long-term basis. Teams should conduct a focus group of a cross-section of your organization's employees to determine what communication approaches will work best for them, focusing on a variety of written, oral, and electronic approaches. Working with your internal marketing department to create a communications plan will also help your strategies best reach your audience. There are many communication resources available through Wellcoa and other worksite wellness websites.

7. EVALUATION

The evaluation section of the plan describes how you will measure the success of your initiative in achieving the goals and objectives you have outlined. Evaluation measures can include participation, participant satisfaction, changes in environment and culture, and changes in employee knowledge, attitude, and behaviors. It can also include changes in productivity and impact to your organization's bottom line through reductions in health care costs, disability claims, absenteeism, and turnover. Your plan should be designed to evaluate your success in achieving your objectives and benchmark. It should also examine the process you used to implement your program so that you may make quality improvements in the future. Further information on what you should consider measuring and how to measure it is described in "Step 6, Evaluate and Report on the Initiative."

Evaluation provides data to support the ongoing operation and improvement of your wellness initiative. It provides the results-driven information that will allow you to effectively expand your initiative to address additional health and wellness needs.

Unfortunately, many organizations conducting wellness initiatives and activities do not monitor the results. The word "evaluation" can carry with it the misconception that the activities will be time-consuming and that you must hire a 3rd-party evaluator to gather and analyze results-driven data. The good news is that evaluation can be very simple and straightforward and does not require a PhD researcher to be effective.

Section 2 of this toolkit described the importance of creating a written plan for your wellness initiative. One element of that plan is developing goals and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) objectives. Spending the time to develop the right objectives will help you develop your evaluation plan. In fact, if your SMART objectives are written properly, they will contain an outcome and a measurement tool. For example, one objective for a pilot group exercise class may be, "By the end of eight weeks, at least 50% of employees participating in a 30-minute group exercise class two times per week will self-report a decrease in stress levels, as measured by pre- and post-surveys." Investing in this thinking as you plan your initiative will enhance the quality of your evaluation efforts.

Evaluation efforts should be tailored to your initiative's goals and objectives as well as the benchmarks you attach to the specific activities in your timeline. It should also allow you to compare results to the baseline data you gathered in Step 3.

Your evaluation could focus on the following indicators:

- **PROCESS MEASURES:** A process evaluation reviews the plan your wellness team developed and determines the extent to which the plan was implemented on time, in the planned scope, and within budget. This step can help your wellness team become more effective over time and can inform changes in how you approach your annual wellness initiative efforts.

- **PARTICIPATION:** One key to a successful worksite wellness initiative is employee participation. Measuring participation can include counting the number of the people who took part in an activity as well as measuring how often they attended. Frequency of participation can also help you begin to recognize changes to employees' knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors. It is the first step to managing chronic disease risks.

- **PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION:** Again, this indicator provides a barometer for whether your initiative is functioning properly. Be aware, however, that high participant satisfaction alone is not enough to guarantee that your organization will achieve outcomes related to health status improvements or bottom line improvements.

- **IMPROVEMENTS IN KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS:** These measures can help indicate whether your initiative is achieving the outcomes you desire. It is important to remember that to show improvements, you must first gather baseline data. If your Step 3 assessment activities do not gather the baseline data you need, be sure your evaluation plan identifies how you will gather these data. You cannot measure change unless you know where you started.

- **CHANGES IN HEALTH MEASUREMENTS:** Measuring employee's blood pressure, height and weight (to gauge body mass index), blood glucose, and other measures can be done at a health fair or through self-report (though this approach is much less accurate). These measures can help you see if your employees' health status is improving. It is important to collect baseline data if these are measures you wish to use. Keep in mind that some health measures can change quickly and others take time. For example, high blood pressure can respond positively to exercise over a couple of months. Changes in blood cholesterol may take longer.

- **PRODUCTIVITY:** This measure analyzes the extent to which your wellness initiative is having a positive impact on indicators of productivity such as absenteeism, turnover, and morale.

- **RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI):** Measuring your wellness initiative's impact on your organization's bottom line can help sustain the initiative over time. This type of evaluation is more complicated than the other types and may require investment in an outside evaluator. Also, it takes time to see a return on investment. While it is appropriate to monitor indicators for ROI at the end of the first year of your wellness initiative, change will be more apparent by the end of three to five years because changes in health care costs or other investments will not change over a short amount of time. Three local entities can assist you in monitoring ROI:

    o   WorkWell Consultants -www.workwellconsultants.com/
    o   Vivacity-www.vivacity.net/
    o   INHS Community Wellness www. inhs.org

- **REPORTING:** Developing a plan for sharing your evaluation findings is the final step of your evaluation. Results should be reported to the wellness team, senior-level management, CEO and to all employees to reinforce the importance of wellness. Be sure to consider the format you use for reporting: keep it simple and emphasize the objective findings of your data analysis. Using the general outline your business uses for other reports is another effective report-writing practice.

HOW TO DESIGN YOUR WELLNESS INITIATIVE EVALUATION

A variety of methods can be used to gather the data that will tell you whether your wellness initiative is accomplishing its objectives and where there may be room for improvement.

The type of data you collect will fall into one of two categories:

- **QUANTITATIVE DATA** is objective, number-driven data. It deals with the QUANTITY of the issue.

- **QUALITATIVE DATA** is data that describes the QUALITY of the participants' experience. It will be useful to you in understanding trends in thoughts or opinion and can be used to better understand the findings that your quantitative data suggest.

Some methods are most useful in gathering qualitative data, such as focus groups or semi-structured interviews. Other methods, such as surveys, are useful in gathering quantitative data. However, surveys that employ open-ended questions can also produce qualitative data. Both types of data are useful in helping you assess your initiative's success. Common methods that you may adapt to your initiative are described below.

SURVEYS

Surveys provide an opportunity for participants to self-report their perception of their health and wellness. They can be offered electronically using common online survey services such as Survey Monkey. These services include both free and fee-based services. Free services are less robust and limit the number of respondents. Fee-based services offer additional support in collecting, compiling, analyzing, and reporting on data.

One of the most important aspects of survey development is writing questions that will draw out the information you seek. Questions should ask the respondent to answer only one question at a time, for example. Considering the order of questions is also important because mentioning a concept early in a survey can influence a respondent's responses later in the survey. Keeping the survey short will also be effective in increasing the response rate and completing all answers.

Questions can invite many types of answers. One common survey approach is to use a five-point Likert-type scale that allows participants to rate their response (e.g., strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree). The benefit of a Likert-type scale is that it is easy to aggregate and analyze responses. It also provides quantitative data about your program.

A multiple choice-style question asks respondents to select the response that is most accurate to them. For example, you could write a question that says, "On average, how many times per week did you attend the group fitness class? (a) 0 to 1; (b) 2-3; (c) more than three. It is also very easy to aggregate and analyze these types of responses.

Open-ended questions allow participants to provide a written response. For example, a valuable question for gathering qualitative data may be, "What suggestions do you have for creating a work environment that promotes stress management?"

Surveys can be useful in establishing a baseline and then following up to see what has changed. In the event that you will be using surveys, remember to administer the survey before you start the program and then at key intervals throughout the program. In an eight-week pilot activity, you would likely administer the same survey twice: once before the program starts and once after it ends. For longer term activities, you might choose to conduct the survey at six-month intervals.

After you have collected survey responses, a member or members of your wellness team must analyze and interpret the responses to understand the findings. Again, using a web-based survey tool such as Survey Monkey can take a lot of the work out of this step, as these surveys collect and compile responses for you, making analysis much simpler. You will want to report the results to your worksite wellness team, your organization's leadership, and HR. In addition, reporting results to the entire workforce will help motivate employees to continue participating in wellness programming.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups provide an excellent opportunity to gather and analyze qualitative data regarding your wellness initiative. A focus group is a semi-structured interview conducted with a small group of people. The most effective focus group will be run by a facilitator who is skilled in remaining objective, probing for more information, and encouraging participation among all focus groups members. Assigning a team member to serve as the transcriber or note-taker is another important role to ensure that participants' responses are accurately captured. Recording or videotaping the focus group is another option.

Prior to conducting a focus group, it is important to create a focus group guide that outlines:

- The questions that define the intent of your research (what do you want to learn through this focus group?);
- The open-ended questions you will ask the focus group participants to gather qualitative data to answer your research questions; and
- Follow-up questions or "probes" to elicit additional information. Probes should always be open-ended questions, such as "Tell me more about that" rather than yes/no questions.

To encourage full participation and decrease the risk of discussion dominance, it is best to limit the number of focus group participants to between six and nine. Providing a small incentive for participation is also a good way to ensure your focus groups are well attended. Consider your incentives carefully to ensure they resonate with the wellness theme. A gift card to an organic juice cafe would be preferred to a coffee gift card, for example.

Following the focus group, you will need to analyze the notes or recordings to identify themes that emerged and then write up a simple report documenting the themes, findings, and recommendations. The report should also include the questions you were trying to answer.

While a focus group is an effective way to gather information from participants to understand changes in their knowledge, attitude, and behaviors, it is important to remember that it is more effective if you have baseline data to compare your findings.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews (also known as key-informant interviews) provide an opportunity for you to delve deeply into the views held by key individuals. For example, when you are in the planning stages of your initiative, you may wish to interview the person in your organization responsible for health benefits or your organization's safety officer. Semi-structured interviews are useful in gathering initial information that guides your program planning. Conducting interviews with these same people three to six months into your wellness initiative can help you gather qualitative evidence of change.

As with focus groups, semi-structured interviews require a skilled interviewer and note-taking. After you have conducted your interviews, a wellness team member should be assigned to analyze the notes for themes and write a report of findings to communicate with executives, middle management, and employees.

EVALUATION TOOLS

- Kellogg Foundation's Logic model Guide
  www.wkkf.org/.../wk-**kellogg**-**foundation**-**logic**-**model**-development-...

  CDC resources

- http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/tobacco/evaluating.htm

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