

# worksite wellness

Health Promotion Resources ~

Carver County Public Health ~ March 2007



## Worksite environment influences healthy behaviors

Most adults today spend more time at work than anywhere else. That's one reason why worksites are a great venue for promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors. The worksite organizational culture and environment are powerful influences on behavior and could be used to encourage and support employees in living healthy lifestyles. Employers can help their employees improve or maintain healthy lifestyles through health promotion programs at work.

Carver County Public Health knows that by improving the health of employees, employers will benefit in many ways, including increased worker productivity and lower healthcare costs. Read on for simple ideas on how employers can support their employees in promoting healthy lifestyles.

## Employers can improve the health of their employees and the company

In general, there are three things that an employer can do to improve the health of the employees and the company.

- (1) Communicate more with your employees about health-related concerns and goals.
- (2) Implement affordable health promotion programs that make sense for your workplace.
- (3) Make a permanent commitment to improving and maintaining your employees' health and well-being.

The following are examples:

- Implement employee lifestyle change programs (e.g., smoking cessation, physical fitness activities, improved nutrition, lower back care, stress reduction).
- Institute a Health Risk Appraisal and Counseling Program.
- Develop a health promotion mission statement.
- Develop an organizational culture that is flexible, socially supportive, and responsive to employees' needs (e.g., training in team-building, conflict resolution, and violence prevention skills).
- Establish a corporate policy to maintain a smoke-free/drug-free workplace.
- Form a workplace wellness committee that meets regularly.
- Regularly monitor health promotion programs' effectiveness, costs, benefits and participation.
- Communicate regularly with employees regarding health promotion (e.g., meetings, newsletters, posters, e-mail, payroll inserts).



## Tips to make health promotion affordable

- Provide scaled-down versions of programs found in larger firms.
- Utilize and promote your health-care/insurance provider's services and resources.
- Utilize free and low-cost services of health-related non-profit organizations.
- Work jointly with other small-medium size businesses (e.g., within the same building or business complex) to pool health resources.
- Provide injury and illness prevention trainings (e.g., proper lifting techniques, stretching, proper posture at the workstation, disaster preparedness, first aid and CPR) for employees.
- Provide self-care information (e.g., books, pamphlets) to employees to treat minor health problems on their own, thus reducing emergency room and doctor visits.

**Source: Healthy Arkansas Worksite Wellness Tool Kit**  
[http://www.arkansas.gov/ha/worksite\\_wellness/index](http://www.arkansas.gov/ha/worksite_wellness/index).

## Choose assessment tools to meet your company's needs

Assessment tools can provide important information on employee health needs and interests. Assessments can also help employers manage their health care costs.

### Employee Interest Survey

Employee interest surveys are for all employees even management. It is a good idea to find out what approaches will have the greatest chance of success before implementing worksite wellness programs. The survey can be as simple as 10 or 12 questions or it can be multiple pages based on the organization's need. An employee interest survey can provide valuable information when designing your wellness program.

### Organizational Health Survey

The organizational survey is important in learning whether or not the organization's culture and environment supports healthy behaviors. The survey is composed of questions that identify what opportunities and barriers exist in the workplace in terms of supporting and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

### Health Risk Assessment (HRA)

The health risk assessment can help companies of all sizes identify their workforce's problems and establish targets for improvement. Using the HRA, you can discover risk levels, determine appropriate interventions and measure results.

### Survey and Assessment Resources

The following links are resources for finding sample surveys/assessment tools:

WELCOA (Wellness Councils of America):

<http://www.welcoa.com/freeresources/index.php?category=11>

Michigan Department of Community Health, Healthy Work Environments:

<http://www.mihealthtools.org/work/Default.asp?tab=Resources>

New York State Health Department, Heart Health checklist:

<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/heart/healthy/heartcheck.pdf>

Tompkins County Worksite Wellness:

[www.tompkins-co.org/wellness/worksite/survey/](http://www.tompkins-co.org/wellness/worksite/survey/)

## Five reasons why obesity and chronic disease are thriving in the U.S.

- The sense that there is a lack of time in our fast-paced society that prevents us from taking the time to prepare and eat nutritious meals and get regular exercise.
- Restaurant and fast food outlets that are "super-sizing" servings as a selling point to customers. These extra-large portions of foods are high in fat, saturated fat, trans-fats, cholesterol and sodium.
- Many vending machines, snack bars and cafeterias offer few, if any, healthy choice options.
- There is increased inactivity due to labor saving devices, computer, video/games, security issues and lack of sidewalks, biking trails and walking paths.
- Use of tobacco products increases the risks for chronic diseases.

## Featured Resource

Carver County Public Health would like to encourage employees to get active this spring. Spring is a great time for employers to offer physical activity campaigns to support and encourage employees to get moving for their health. The following are two free campaigns that can be implemented at your worksite.

### The **do** Campaign

Check out how you can have your own **do** Campaign at work. Take a look at three different sample campaigns to see how do materials can be used. If you need some ideas about how to make your **do** Campaign happen, look at the eight-step implementation process under "Getting Started." Please see the following website for the campaign materials: [www.do-groove.com](http://www.do-groove.com)

### The **Step by Step: Walking Your Way to Wellness Campaign**

The goal of this program is to get your employees more physically active. Specifically, the goal is to have each of the participants walking about 10,000 steps a day — approximately five miles. The coordinator's guide includes all of the essential steps needed to carry out the entire campaign. Please see the following link for campaign materials:

[http://www.welcoa.org/freeresources/pdf/stepbystep\\_ic.pdf](http://www.welcoa.org/freeresources/pdf/stepbystep_ic.pdf)



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