Worksite Wellness – Increasing Physical Activity

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Learning Objectives

The session will focus on specific environmental change strategies and policies, applicable to help employees become or maintain their level of physical activity.

1. Understand the benefits of worksite wellness, including financial returns, absenteeism and productivity.

2. Discuss environmental system strategies to encourage positive behavior change in the worksite setting

3. Identify barriers to implementing policies and environmental interventions
A Growing Need: For Individuals and Companies

The growing need to help American’s achieve healthier lifestyles:

- Adult (and childhood) obesity/overweight level continues to increase: 65% of all Adults are obese or overweight.
- People are less active due to technology, better/mass transportation.
- Sedentary jobs increased 83% since 1950; physically active jobs now 25%, 50% less than 1950.
- Americans work 47 hours a week - 164 more hours a year than 20 years ago.
A Growing Need: For Individuals and Companies

The growing need to help American’s achieve healthier lifestyles:

- Obesity costs American companies $225.8B per year in health-related productivity losses
- The average healthcare cost exceeds $3,000 per person annually
  - An obese employee costs employer additional $460 to $2,500 in medical costs & sick days/year
- Preventable illnesses make up 70% of illness costs in the U.S.
- According to AHA Research, poor economy has a negative health impact:
  - Poor economy affecting people’s ability to care for health: 57%
  - People saving money by canceling appointments, medicine, etc.: 32%
  - People eating fewer fruits/vegetables: 43%
Components of Worksite Wellness Initiatives

- Comprehensive approach aimed at improving employees overall health

- Programming should be integrated into the organizational structure

- Environmental modifications to promote healthy behaviors

- Policy approaches allow for increased opportunity for employers to reach a greater portion of the employee population

- Address the needs of all employees
Returns on Investment

- Financial Returns
- Absenteeism & Presenteeism
- Productivity
Walking and Heart Health

You’ll gain about two hours of life expectancy for each hour of regular exercise.

Walking for as little as 30 minutes a day provides heart health benefits.

Physically active people save $500 a year in healthcare costs.

Walking has the lowest drop out rate of any physical activity.
How to get employees moving at work?

Environmental Interventions

- Defined as those that do not require individuals to self-select but are for all employees.

- Affect the structural features of the workplace which may impact an employee’s to make healthier choices.

Examples:

- Designation of space for wellness activities, including exercise, in owned or leased office space.

- Centralizing office resources so employees have to walk to access them.

- Modified workstations that encourage standing or moving (i.e., slow speed treadmill)
Additional Examples

- Provide shower and/or changing facilities onsite
- Provide outdoor exercise areas such as fields and trails for employee use
- Provide bicycle racks in safe, convenient, and accessible locations
- Offer on-site fitness opportunities, such as group classes or personal training
- Provide an on-site exercise facility – joint use agreements.
How to get employees moving at work?

**Regulatory/ Policy Approach**
- Allow employer to reach a greater percent of the employee base.
- Need to adhere to regulations that address hazards to employee health and safety.

**Examples:**
- Policy that offers flex-scheduling to allow time for exercise.
- Policy that each meeting needs to incorporate at least 5-10 minutes of physical activity.
Financial Incentives to Address Barriers

- Behavior change is difficult, especially over the long-term.

- There have been favorable outcomes with the use of financial incentives to foster long-term change, such as quitting smoking or losing weight.

- Growing consensus that incentives should be provided directly to the individual rather than the provider of healthcare services.

- Additional studies need to determine the true efficacy of incentive rewards, the long-term behavior change, and whether positive or negative incentives are more effective.
Start! Framework
Preventing Heart Disease and Stroke Through Improved Physical Activity and Health

Adults (Men/Women, Ages 35–54) & Companies

- Start! Walking Program
- MyStart! Online Tracking Tool
- MyStart! Online Community
- MyStart! Online Walking Plan
- National Start! Walking Day
- Start! Fit-Friendly Companies
- Start! Eating Healthy Day
- Start! Heart Walk Events
- Start! Walking Paths

Consumer Platform – Startwalkingnow.org
• Free way to set personal fitness & nutrition goals

• Tracks multiple types of physical activity

• Mapping feature helps find routes and track distances

• Great way to track progress with or without a pedometer
• Ability to track employees progress
• Great tool for competitions, challenges and wellness campaigns
• Great for companies with multiple locations across the country

Startwalkingnow.org
Start! Fit-Friendly Recognition Program

The Start! Fit-Friendly Companies program recognizes employers who champion and prioritize the health of their employees and work to create a culture of physical activity in the workplace.

Gold: Awarded twice per year to companies that meet criteria.
Platinum: Awarded twice per year to companies that meet the Gold criteria and can demonstrate measurable behavior changes.

Workplace Fitness Innovation Award and Community Fitness Innovation Award Awarded to companies that develop innovative and efficient methods to promote physical activity beyond the criteria.

Over 960 Companies Currently Recognized

Application Deadlines:
- January 31 & July 31
Fit-Friendly Recognition

- Physical Activity
- Nutrition
- Culture
Professional Resources

- Worksite Wellness Programs for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention – A Policy Statement from the American Heart Association (October 2009)

- Interventions to Promote Physical Activity and Dietary Lifestyle Changes for Cardiovascular Risk Reduction in Adults. (July 12, 2010)

- [http://circ.ahajournals.org](http://circ.ahajournals.org)
Additional Resources
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Healthier Worksite Initiative

www.cdc.gov/nndphp/dnpao/hwi/policy

FLEXIBLE WORK TIME

- Alternative Work Schedules - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Additional Resources

- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICIES
  
  - Policy Supporting Physical Activity
    

  - Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Policy - North Carolina Division of Public Health
    

  - Food and Physical Activity Worksite Policies - San Bernardino-Riverside Counties Health Collaborative Netcom III
    
    http://www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/eatwell/NetCompoliciesA.htm
THANK YOU!

For more information:
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www.heart.org