

IMPROVING EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND THE BOTTOM LINE

Collaborating across chronic disease programs to create healthier work environments

Public Health Problem

- Adults spend many waking hours at work.
- Making workplaces healthier helps employees live longer, healthier lives, improves productivity and reduces absenteeism and is a goal of the Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan.
- Enabling businesses to change the worksite environment requires education, technical assistance and the active participation of public and business partners.

Program

- The Program Integration Workgroup of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services recognized the need for worksite health interventions addressing risk factors for all chronic diseases served by state programs. They developed the *Wisconsin Worksite Wellness Resource Kit* with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Program taking the lead.
- The Comprehensive Cancer program funded a pilot test of the resource kit, revisions were made and a grant from the National Governor's Association funded coalitions to create worksite wellness programs in local businesses with an emphasis on changing policies to improve the workplace environment.

Impact

- All worksites report making changes to company policy including provision of healthy food at meetings, vending machine changes that doubled or tripled the availability of healthy food and beverage choices, health insurance discounts for healthy behaviors, flexible scheduling to increase opportunities for physical activity or breastfeeding, cash or gift incentives for healthy lifestyle behaviors, health club discounts, healthy guidelines for cafeteria food, providing bike racks, and establishing walking routes.
- Many participating employees increased their physical activity and their fruit and vegetable consumption and several sites reported overweight workers lost weight.
- Coalitions are continuing and expanding worksite wellness activities even without additional grant funds.
- Training to promote the resource kit continues with state and private sponsorship as a way to increase the number of healthy worksites.
- At least nine other states have adopted the resource kit or created an adapted version of the kit for use in their own state, saving program dollars by using a tested product.

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