

The Business Case for Worksite Wellness

The Problem

The health problems resulting from unhealthy lifestyle choices such as tobacco use, poor nutrition and physical inactivity are costing the United States economy over \$117 billion a year. Unhealthy workers require more medical care, take more sick days, and are less productive on the job. The ability of companies across the nation to thrive and remain competitive is being threatened by the burden of poor health and the ever increasing costs of health care.

A Solution

On average, Americans spend 36 percent of their total waking hours at work. Therefore, worksites are a prime venue for promoting and supporting healthy lifestyle habits for employees. A recent national opinion poll conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management showed that the majority (55%) of employers polled were utilizing worksite wellness programs to improve employee health. In addition, 85 percent of polled employers that had a worksite wellness program were interested in expanding or improving the program over the next three years, while 69 percent of employers that don't offer wellness programs were interested in developing them within three years.

How Does it Work?

A worksite wellness program can inspire employees to take responsibility for their own health. The program can raise awareness so employees with fewer risk factors remain at low risk for chronic diseases. A program can also encourage employees with health risk factors to make lifestyle changes to improve their quality of life.

Benefits

- ✓ Improved productivity and performance
- ✓ Improved morale
- ✓ Reduced healthcare costs
- ✓ Reduced workers compensation claims
- ✓ Reduced absenteeism
- ✓ Enhanced corporate image

A Good Investment

Programs have achieved a rate of return on investment ranging from \$3-\$15 for each dollar invested with savings realized within 12-18 months.

Sources:

Alliance for a Healthier Minnesota (2012). The State of Worksite Wellness in America 2012.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010). American Time Use Survey 2010.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004). The burden of chronic diseases and their risk factors: national and state perspectives.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2005). Physical activity and good nutrition: Essential elements to prevent chronic diseases and obesity 2005.

Trust for America's Health (2012). F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2012.

Wellness Councils of America (2009). Fact Sheet: Physical Activity for a Healthy Weight.