



PROACTIVE HEALTH CARE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

RATIONALE:

According to several large meta-analyses, comprehensive worksite health management programs, which utilize health promotion, risk factor assessment and management, and disease management strategies, are effective at reducing employee health risks and generating \$3-\$6 savings on medical costs for every \$1 spent (1-5). Mattson-Koffman et al., in a 2005 review of worksite literature, cited the following strategies as key components in the makeup of comprehensive programs for the prevention of heart disease and stroke, which have been proven effective at reducing employee health risks (6):

Approach 1: Environmental Interventions That Support Healthy Lifestyles. Creating opportunities for employees to make healthy choices, by creating a supportive work environment, reinforces healthy behaviors, regardless of employee health status.

Approach 2: Policies And Financial Incentives That Support Healthy Lifestyles. Creating opportunities for employees to make healthy choices, through development of supportive health policies, reinforces healthy behaviors, regardless of employee health status.

Approach 3: Frequent And Simple Prevention Messages. Messages given to all of the employees throughout the organization through posters, newsletters, e-mails, and websites can increase employee awareness to take action.

Approach 4: Health Education Classes, Workshops, Medical Self-Care. Health education targeted at priority health needs reinforces healthy behaviors of employees.

Approach 5: Screenings, HRAs And Referral Leading To Risk Factor Follow-Up Education And Counseling. Individual risk factor follow-up education and counseling after screening is the most effective intervention component in terms of reducing employee health risks and in helping individuals control their risk factors such as blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking and substance use and abuse (2, 6, 7). NOTE: Individual risk factor follow-up education and counseling after screening appears to be the most robust program component (2, 6).

The role and value of worksite-based health promotion is being viewed with increased attention. Worksite health and productivity management programs improve employee health, reduce health care utilization, increase productivity and enhance company performance. Despite many proven benefits, there is currently no coordinated approach for small (20-50) and micro (<20) businesses to develop such programs systemically in Maine or across the nation.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Our community-based employee wellness program for very small businesses – demonstrates that small businesses within a community can join together to offer their workers wellness activities that would not normally be economically feasible for groups their size. This model complements national health reform, which proposes models to allow small employers to group together to purchase coverage. Large employers understand that wellness and prevention form a continuum with insurance; indeed, as the law permits, employers and insurers offer incentives for wellness. By creating a project that gives small employers a similar opportunity to jointly obtain worksite wellness, this project creates a prototype of a complementary product that can be used to offer a full spectrum of health, wellness and medical care protection for small and very small employers.

Recent studies show that environmental interventions are an important element in employee wellness programs. Working with small employers that share a commercial district, we support environmental wellness effects at a community level. Because others in the community also benefit from such policies as improved walk ability, development of fitness-oriented community recreation opportunities and wellness communication, the community-based micro-wellness is expected to ultimately improve the health – and lower unnecessary medical spending – for the whole community.

References: 1) Chapman, 2003; 2) Heaney & Goetzel, 1997; 3) Pelletier, 1997; 4) Pelletier, 2001; 5) Aldana, 2001; 6) Mattson-Koffman, 2005; 7) Monti et.al., 2005

OWNERSHIP COMMITMENT:

Companies who have embraced wellness as part of “how they do business” have one thing in common. They show a commitment to their most valuable resource – their people. They are aware of the increased pressures associated with downsized employers, a rapidly changing workplace, an aging work force and the challenge of balancing work and family obligations. And they share a common belief that healthy workers are happier, absent less and more productive.

COUNCIL REGISTRATION:

The Somerset County Chamber of Commerce Wellness Council (SCCWC) is a network of health care providers, area businesses and organizations committed to creating and maintaining low cost, no cost wellness programs designed to support the pro active health care of their employees/ members, their families and those they serve in the community.

- Their goal is to assist your small business in making the work place a healthier and ultimately safer place to work.
- The Council has been established to promote Pro-active care through the development and support of local business/organization wellness programs using evidence based approaches and strategies.
- There is a small annual fee of \$2 per employee (max payment \$200) to support council efforts. Checks are made payable to Redington-Fairview General Hospital and mailed to Greater Somerset Public Health Collaborative, PO Box 468, Skowhegan, ME 04976, Attention: Wellness Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN:

The purpose of completing this assessment is to establish your worksite’s strengths and areas in need of improvement for policy and environmental health.

- The assessment will lead your workgroup to recommend actions for changes to make the worksite more supportive of healthy behaviors (i.e. healthy food choices in snack machines, policies to enforce no smoking on worksite grounds or encouraging walking during break times).
- You may find some of the actions for supporting healthy behaviors are easy to do and others may not be feasible or efficient in your worksite.
- The assessment results can also be used as a baseline measure for evaluation, this initial assessment can later be compared with a follow-up assessment several months later to note progress.

EMPLOYEE SURVEYS:

You should conduct an employee survey to get a better understanding of your target audience (your company’s employees) and get an initial idea of their current health habits and interest areas.

- The survey can be tailored to your worksite and can be done in paper form or through the use of survey instruments on the internet.
- As was the case with the worksite environmental assessment scan, the employee survey results can also be used as a baseline measure for later evaluation.
- The initial survey results can later be compared with a follow-up survey several months later to note progress.
- Make it as easy as possible for staff members to complete and submit the information so you get a high return rate. Consider offering an incentive or prize for employees who complete the survey.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN REPORT & WORK PLAN:

The environmental scan report incorporates information collected from the worksite environmental scan and the employee survey results.

- The work plan ought to include your program mission, three or four objectives and several strategies under each objective.
- The work plan supports a framework to encourage, support and evaluate “best health practices.”
- Work plan objectives can include:
 - Environmental changes to the workplace to encourage healthy eating, walking programs and smoking policies.
 - Implementing the WellSuite On-line Portal to enable employees to take their personal wellness profile on-line and access reports, track physical activities and have access to health resources and programs, and

- Becoming part of the WELLpoints Challenge Program that provides incentives for completing health screenings, physical activities and health and chronic disease education classes.
- The work plan is designed to support employees in changing behaviors. In order to set up healthy workplaces, wellness objectives must have a program champion within the organization, have employee ownership, be management supported, results driven and strategically aligned with the central company objectives of the organization.

WELLSUITE ADVANTAGE ON-LINE PORTAL:

A Comprehensive Wellness On-Line Program: The WellSuite® Portal is an integrated, comprehensive, on-line suite of products.

- Companies with successful worksite wellness programs experience lower healthcare costs, increased productivity, and decreased absenteeism due to illness and injury. Healthy employees feel better and live longer.

The On-Line Portal Provides The Essential Components Of A Successful Wellness Program:

- Health Risk Assessment - The most scientifically-based health risk assessment on the market. Participants receive a report highlighting what they are doing well first, and then identifying risk areas and opportunities for improvement.
- Healthy Living Guidelines DVD and Learning Guide - Discover the value of the assessment results with an online video overview.
- Lifestyle Intervention Programs -Provides participants with an opportunity to make changes in their health. (Stress Coping Techniques, Weight Management, Smoking Cessation, Alcohol Management, 90-Day Walking Program)
- Educational Health Information - Presented in a simple, easy-to-understand format.
- WellNotes Challenge - Engage employees with regular and motivating health communications with an attractive, easy-to-read, 2-page wellness newsletter that will keep employees informed about the latest health and medical information. Also includes a monthly Health Challenge.
- Health Activity Tracker - Track health activities and goals to inspire and motivate. Program generates personal reports and awards points for completed health activities.

PERSONAL WELLNESS PROFILE:

A personal health assessment tool for tailored support and guidance toward optimal health.

- The Personal Wellness Profile is an educational tool which only takes minutes to complete, but can add quality years to your life and quality time to your work day.
- The Personal Wellness Profile questionnaire covers such areas as personal medical conditions, lifestyle habits, general health status, emotional well-being and biometric data consisting of blood glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure results.
- Risk factor analysis of this data highlights areas for improvement, minor concerns or major problems. This information helps the participant make informed decisions about health management.
- This information is confidential.
- GSPHC provides an experienced program counselor to guide participants through interpreting results.
- If results are questionable, the participant will be directed to follow-up with their Primary Care Physician.
- The Personal Wellness Profile is easy and convenient. In general, it is completed in 15 to 20 minutes.
- A hard copy report containing screening results is provided to participants. Feedback sessions provide participants the opportunity to ask questions and receive referral information.

WELLNESS COACHING:

Health Coaching / Wellness Coaching helps employees and their families lead healthier lives through a telephonic coaching program.

- The Wellness Coach utilizes the training of the "Intrinsic Coach" as their primary way of working with clients. *"Intrinsic Coaching* is a conversation that elicits best thinking and decision making so people can create results that are important to them." It is between two equally valuable and valued people who are peers in the conversation. The coach is the catalyst for the discovery of answers people already have and can discover more easily when they are given time to think more intrinsically.

- *Intrinsic Coaching* is focused on goals, not problems, and engages people to create what is important to them. It is informed by cognitive science and enables the coach to provide support and intervention in an accessible and replicable manner.
- Employees initiate the program by contacting (or being contacted by) a wellness coach. The Wellness coach will be the employees' personal champion throughout their individual journey to health and wellness.
- All Wellness Coaches with which we work must have specific certification and training in "Intrinsic Coaching" and a BS degree in community health or be a graduate of an accredited health science program with experience in public health and healthcare settings.

WELLPOINTS CHALLENGE:

Reward Yourself For Living Well! Wellness Initiatives. Choose Seven For A Healthy 2011!

Your business has made the commitment to support health & well being by offering year round wellness programs for health improvement. By participating in one or more of the following initiatives, employees can earn points and fabulous incentives.

- Physical Activity Programs
- Personal Wellness Profile
- Health Screenings
- WellNotes Challenge
- Adventure Classes & Initiatives
- Wellness Coach
- Wellness Courses

YEAR END ASSESSMENT:

We began by assessing where a business is with wellness in the workplace and incorporated a work plan/process to implement best practice. The final phase of a year's work is to repeat the initial assessments to measure progress. Re-assessment of the environment will show policy and environmental changes implemented. Employee assessment will show employee satisfaction and can confirm that the employee's needs are being met. Personal Wellness Profiles, being done yearly, will give the individual and physician health data to measure health risks. Summaries of the WELLpoints Challenge will provide feedback on participation in community programming. This data drives planning for improvement in the next year's planning/action process.

INCENTIVES INCREASE PARTICIPATION:

Most wellness program administrators aim for a high level of employee participation – as high as 80% who complete the health risk assessment (HRA) and follow the recommendations. One proven way for employers to get more people to participate is for them to build incentives into their wellness program.

Approximately two-thirds of all U.S. employers offer some sort of incentive for wellness program participation. The types, amounts, and the uses of incentives vary. But because incentives are not all created equal, not all will have the same effect. The most commonly used incentives – and the percentage of companies using them:

- Non-cash incentives, such as t-shirts, gym bags, and water bottles – 35%
- Gift cards or gift certificates – 25%
- Health benefit incentives, such as reimbursement for wellness program costs – 16%
- Cash incentives – 13%

(Source: International Foundation. Wellness Programs. 2006)

CELEBRATE SUCCESS BY PROVIDING RECOGNITION:

Recognition is an important motivator for employers and employees alike. Both on an individual and organizational basis, wellness programs take time to produce results. Providing recognition for individuals who take steps to improve their health, and for businesses and organizations that support healthy lifestyles, can be a motivating factor to sustain the effort until desired results are seen. Recognition is important to:

- Validates both individual and organizational health promotion efforts.
- Shows the worksite is dedicated to the health and wellbeing of their employees.
- Recognition within the community can also improve company image and future recruitment efforts.