



Improving Worksite Wellness Programs by Addressing Managerial Barriers

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Problem Statement

Health insurance premiums and medical costs continue to increase in California. Many county employees utilize sick time because of chronic diseases, which reduces work productivity. County employees have limited chances to develop healthy lifestyles because of a lack of time and resources. Worksite Wellness Programs are a strategy to address these issues.

Trends of Obesity and Chronic Disease

In the U.S.

- Healthcare-related costs of overweight and obesity:
 - \$117 billion in 2000
- Cost of chronic disease:
 - \$505 billion in 2000
- Overweight and obesity medical costs:
 - \$78.5 billion in 1998
 - \$92.6 billion in 2002
 - \$147 billion in 2008

In California

- Cost for inactivity, obesity, and overweight:
 - \$41.2 billion in 2006 and will be \$52.7 billion in 2011
- Cost of health care and lost productivity from overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity:
 - \$20.4 billion in 2006

Benefits of Worksite Wellness Programs

- Minimizes healthcare costs
- Higher productivity
- Enhance self-esteem and reinforce lifestyle change
- Enhance teamwork through various communication channels
- Improve stewardship, work environments, and corporate citizenship
- Reduces health risks
 - Smoking, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, and alcohol abuse
- Promotes healing
 - Healthy bodies are better able to resist disease and heal faster

Effectiveness Data in 2006

- Reduced healthcare costs by 20 to 55%
- Reduced short-term sick leave by 6 to 32%
- Increased productivity by 2 to 52%

Policies to Support Worksite Wellness in Los Angeles County

- Occupational Health Policy (No. 216.06)
 - Provides surveillance and inspection of workplaces to prevent the occurrence of occupational diseases
- Training Resources Policy (No. 293)
 - County resources shall be utilized in the implementation of programs that promote the development of healthcare manpower
- Lactation Accommodation Policy (No. 733)
- Vending Machines, Fundraising, and County-Sponsored Meetings Policy (No. 3.115)
- Employee Participation in Departmental Smoking Cessation Programs Policy (No. 381.1)

Proposed wellness-related federal legislation

- Healthy Workforce Act of 2009 (H.R.1897) - Internal Revenue Code Rep. Earl Blumenthauer introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives this bill which will allow employers a 50% tax credit for the costs of providing employees with a qualified wellness program.

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Barriers	Strategies to Address Manager's Barriers
Lack of employee participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form worksite wellness committee • Develop marketing plan • Provide incentives (when budget is available) • Select high quality program and diverse educational tools • Create program "Champions" • Educate employees about obesity, chronic disease, and nutrition
Lack of staff resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign dedicated staff • Support dedicated staff with wellness committee • Offer continuing education workshops and externally sponsored trainings
Lack of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize health insurance plans for health screenings, lifestyle behavior change programs, and disease management programs • Connect employees with resources • Encourage use of approved Websites, such as (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/index.htm)
Lack of management support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain upper management support early • Make management support visible • Interview key managers to address their expectations and concerns • Maintain ongoing communications with managers - Share success stories • Take measurements early and often to evaluate success • Establish policies to support program

