

# Engaging Your Workforce In Wellness



Increase Productivity

Reduce Absenteeism

Reduce Healthcare Costs

Reduce Workers' Compensation Costs

Improve Morale

and More

Portage County

Workforce Health & Wellness Coalition

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# Welcome

In August of 2014, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation launched a health & wellness initiative through their Ohio Safety Council Program aimed at "improving the health and wellness of Ohio's workforce." This initiative subsidized local safety councils to incorporate health & wellness training into their current and upcoming safety programs, something the Portage County Safety Council didn't take lightly!

In fact, in response to the initiative we surveyed our members in order to determine their greatest health & wellness needs. As a result, we discovered that 2/3 of our members didn't have an active health & wellness program for their employees but 50% would consider implementing one in the future. We found our mission!

Instead of focusing on the 34% of our member employers that have already adopted health & wellness programs, we decided to target the 66% that didn't! Our strategy was to collaborate with local public & private health experts in order to put relevant and accurate information into the hands of local employers.

As a result of that strategy, seven local organizations came together to form the Portage County Workforce Health & Wellness Coalition. This publication is the first fruit of that collaboration.

It is our hope that this publication will be an excellent resource for your organization and that it will empower you to make better and more informed decisions regarding the health & wellness of your workforce.

Sincerely,



Mike Thompson, MBA  
Manager, Portage County Safety Council  
Chair & Co-Founder, Portage County Workforce Health & Wellness Coalition



# The Business Case for Workforce Wellness

The cost of health care is rising and is projected to continue to rise. Employers are spending more today than ever on the poor health of their employees, and employees are spending more than ever on their own health. Most of this cost is attributed to conditions that are impacted by lifestyle choices, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, arthritis, and depression. These health issues affect many factors in the workplace, including absenteeism, medical and pharmacy costs, lost productivity, workers' compensation, and disability.



Our health risks increase as we age, especially those related to behaviors we can change. The solution is to slow deterioration of health by participating in healthier behaviors such as physical activity, eating more fruits and vegetables, reducing stress, losing weight, quitting smoking, and curbing excessive drinking.

Many employers realize these issues and, in an effort to improve the health of their employees and change these modifiable behaviors, offer workplace wellness initiatives. These initiatives are designed to keep low-risk employees healthy, work with moderate-risk employees to reduce their health risks, and help those who are high-risk to manage their conditions effectively to the point where they move into a lower risk category.

## Top 15 Modifiable Health Risks that Lead to Disease

*\*Major predictors of future illness*

- Inactivity \*
- Tobacco use \*
- Poor diet \*
- Overweight/Obesity\*
- High blood pressure\*
- High cholesterol/triglycerides\*
- Diabetes
- Stress\*
- Substance abuse\*
- Alcohol consumption
- Back pain
- Poor standard of care\*
- Disease/pharmaceutical compliance\*
- Lack of sleep\*
- Lack of health screening\*

<b>85%</b> of health care claim costs are attributed to <b>50%</b> of the population, who have <b>three or more</b> high-risk lifestyle behaviors.	
<b>33%</b>	of Americans are overweight
<b>36%</b>	of Americans are obese
<b>6%</b>	of Americans are extremely obese
<b>66%</b>	of Americans report having an unhealthy diet
<b>50%</b>	of Americans are inactive
<b>28%</b>	of Americans smoke

# The Business Case for Workforce Wellness

## Costs of health risks

Employees with fewer health risks cost less. Moderate-risk employees (3-4 health risks) cost 157% more than low-risk employees (0-2 health risks); high risk employees (5 or more health risks) cost 251% more than low-risk employees.

The total cost of poor employee health adds up to over \$580 billion annually. Out of that total, 20% comes from absence due to illness, workers' compensation, and short- or long-term disability; 40% comes from medical and pharmacy costs; and another 40% comes from lost productivity.

Thirty-eight percent of all absences are due to chronic health issues, costing the average employer \$340 per missed day. Employees with two or more chronic conditions had an average of 20 unproductive days annually, while employees with five or more risk factors had an average of 29 unproductive days.

Companies that didn't offer wellness programs had twice the amount of high-risk employees than those that offered wellness programs.



## Annual costs associated with chronic disease and lifestyle behaviors are increasing

Disease	Annual cost
<i>Heart disease and stroke</i>	\$315 billion
<i>Smoking</i>	\$290 billion
<i>Diabetes</i>	\$245 billion
<i>Excessive alcohol use</i>	\$224 billion
<i>Cancer</i>	\$157 billion
<i>Arthritis</i>	\$128 billion



## Benefits to a Worksite Wellness Program

Employees benefit from an overall increase in personal and professional satisfaction, more job confidence, longer life expectancy, reduction in stress, and an improvement in overall health status.

Employers benefit from increased productivity, reduced medical, short-term disability and workers' compensation costs, less absenteeism, and happier and healthier employees.

For every dollar spent on wellness, the average employer will see a \$3.27 reduction in medical costs and a \$2.73 reduction in absenteeism costs over a 3-5 year period.

Wellness programs create the potential to keep up to 90% of low-risk employees in the low-risk group; to move up to 54% of moderate-risk employees into the low-risk group; and to move up to 23% of high-risk employees into lower risk groups.

Companies that offered successful wellness programs doubled the number of employees who went from high-risk to moderate- or low-risk groups compared to those who did not offer any wellness programs.

# Stretching



In stretching programs conducted by Zurich Group, they found that overall the stretching programs decreased sprain and strain frequency by 61% and severity by 30%.

There is a renewed surge of interest in pre-shift stretching programs, an idea that became popular with businesses in the 1980s. After learning from past mistakes and correcting errors, companies are now seeing significant benefits in implementing pre-shift stretching programs. Instead of a generalized stretching program, new programs are designed to educate employees and address the specific movements of the job tasks being performed by the work group. Management involvement is also a key to success because it shows employees that the company is concerned about their wellbeing and safety.

## Benefits for Employers

### **Proper pre-shift stretching can:**

- Decrease the frequency of workers' compensation claims
- Reduce the severity of workplace injuries
- Improve workplace safety

### **Other benefits include:**

- Employees are reminded daily that the company cares about their safety and wellbeing
- The few minutes each day spent stretching helps employees get into the "work mentality"
- Group stretching increases the sense of unity between hourly employees and management
- All of the above advantages result in increased productivity

## Benefits for Employees

A workplace stretching program can reduce the number of injuries, such as sprains and strains, by accomplishing the following:

- Increased muscle flexibility
- Improved joint range of motion
- Improved circulation
- Improved postural alignment
- Decreased emotional stress because of the physical relaxation
- Improved muscle coordination
- Improved muscle balance
- Reduced fatigue



## Did you know?

Educating employees on the value of pre-shift stretching and the proper performance of each stretch encourages participation, improves effectiveness, and increases return on investment. **Individuals who do not participate in pre-shift stretching programs were 8 times more likely to sustain a work-related injury.** In studies conducted among shift workers and repetitive-motion workers, the cost savings for pre-shift stretching programs were between \$2,900 and \$3,400 per employee and reduced injuries by 6-8%.

# Walking

Walking improves your muscle strength and makes the muscles more sensitive to glucose, the molecule your body breaks down to produce energy. Having stronger muscles helps you process the glucose in your system more effectively and efficiently, thereby reducing the risk of Type 2 Diabetes.

Each time your foot strikes the ground you send a vibration through your system. When you walk, your muscles get stronger. These vibrations and the stronger muscles place healthy tension on your bones, causing them to become stronger as well.

To gain the optimal health benefits, it is recommended that you walk 30 to 40 minutes a day. Some studies indicate that you can break these walks into three or four 10-minute walking sessions.

## Benefits for Employers

- Walking is the easiest behavioral change that improves health
- It is usually the easiest and least expensive activity to implement in the workplace
- It is the physical activity with the lowest dropout rate
- Even employees with health issues can participate with a doctors approval
- It improves productivity through increased physical and mental wellbeing
- Reduces the risk of 5 out of the top 10 risk predictors of future illness

## Benefits for Employees

- Weight control
- Lower blood pressure and cholesterol
- Prevents or helps to manage Type 2 Diabetes
- Prevents osteoporosis by strengthening bones
- Decreases stress
- Improves sleep
- Improve balances and coordination



## Walking Returns

Walking reduces 5 out of the top 10 risk predictors of future illness. If employees reduce these risk factors by being physically active, the cost of treating these illnesses goes down. Employees with 3 or less illness predictors cost almost half in healthcare costs than employees with 4 or more predictors.

## Did you know?

If you did not change the number of daily calories you take in, but add a 30-minute walk each day, you would lose weight. If you weigh 150 pounds, you would lose 10-pounds per year.

Walking uses energy, thereby releasing stress. Brisk walking causes the release of endorphins, which are the hormones that elevate our sense of happiness. This feeling of wellbeing makes it easier to face our daily challenges with a sense of calm engagement.

# Stress

Stress is a large contributor to the health of your employees. It is more strongly associated with health complaints than financial or family problems. If an employee feels valued, is encouraged and is able to have input at work, then they are better able to deal with work stress.

## 7 Ways to Reduce Your Stress

- Physical activity
- Relaxation Techniques
- Balanced diet
- 7-8 hours sleep per night
- Avoid drugs, alcohol, and tobacco
- Time management techniques
- Counseling

### Benefits for Employers

- Reduction of absenteeism
- Reduction of on-the-job accidents
- Reduction of job turnover
- Improved interaction and conflict resolution among employees



### Benefits for Employees

- Ability to concentrate and focus on tasks
- Reduction of stress in personal lives

## How Stress Affects the Individual

Body/Physical	Mood/Emotional/Intellectual	Behavior
Decreased immune response More frequent colds/flu Headaches/migraines Muscle aches/tension Chest pain Fatigue Stomach/GI problems Sleep problems/Insomnia Weight gain/loss Increase in BP Heart issues Worsening of chronic illnesses	Anxiety Depression/sadness Restlessness Lack of motivation/focus Irritability/anger Edginess/moodiness Easily irritated Increase in need for addictions Suicidal thoughts Hopelessness Feelings of being overwhelmed Feelings of being trapped Poor judgment/decision making	Decrease in work ethic Decrease in work output Over eating/emotional eating/ binge eating Under-eating/anorexia/purging Drug/alcohol abuse Tobacco use Social/family withdraw Angry outbursts Violent behavior Increase in addictive behavior Suicide Procrastination/Inability to take action

## Did you know?

80%	of employees feel stress on the job
50%	have expressed needing help in managing stress
42%	said their coworkers need help in dealing with stress
65%	of employees said workplace stress affects them daily

Stressed employees reported the following difficulties:	
62%	routinely have stress related neck pain
44%	have eye strain
38%	complain of hurting hands
34%	have difficulty sleeping due to stress
12%	called in sick due to job stress
>50%	report skipping lunch



# Tobacco Use

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable illness and death in the United States. Recognized as a cause of multiple cancers, heart disease, stroke, infertility, complications of pregnancy, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), tobacco use is responsible for 443,000 deaths per year. Quitting tobacco products greatly reduces one's risk for chronic disease and early death.

Tobacco use among employees negatively impacts an employer's bottom line. Reductions in productivity are exacerbated by increased health care utilization, absenteeism, and use of disability leave by employees with tobacco-related illnesses. Further, research indicates that nonsmokers are more productive, take fewer sick days per year, and use fewer health care resources than smokers.

## Benefits for Employers

- Tobacco use costs an estimated \$96.8 billion per year in lost productivity due to sickness and premature death.
- Studies have shown that men who smoke use 4 more sick days per year than nonsmoking men, and women who smoke use 2 more sick days per year than nonsmoking women.
- Of the U.S. adults who smoke, men incur \$15,800 and women incur \$17,500 more in lifetime medical expenses than men and women who do not smoke (in 2002 dollars).
- Research shows that investing \$35-\$410 per participating employee in a one-year program generated a positive return on investment within 3 years.

## Benefits for Employees

- Reduced risk for heart disease and stroke
- Reduced heart disease risk within 1 to 2 years of quitting
- Reduced respiratory symptoms (such as coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath) and reduced risk of developing some lung diseases
- Reduced risk for lung cancer and many other types of cancer
- Reduced risk of infertility and having a low-birth weight baby for women of childbearing age

- Encouraging employees that are tobacco users to quit is the quickest approach to reducing tobacco-related disease, death, and health care costs.
- Workplace tobacco cessation programs can help tobacco users identify their motivations to quit while tailoring the environment to make it easier for them to do so.
- The most efficient and effective cessation efforts are population-wide, such as policy, systems, or environmental changes.
- Smoking cessation initiatives have a success rate ranging from 10-30%.

## Did you know?

What happens after you quit smoking?	
After 20 minutes	Heart rate and blood pressure drop
After 12 hours	Carbon monoxide level in the blood returns to normal
After 2 weeks – 3 months	Lung function and circulation begin to improve; coughing and shortness of breath decrease
After 1 year	Excess risk of heart disease is half that of continuing smoker's
After 5 years	The risk of developing throat, mouth, and esophagus cancer is cut in half Cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker Stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker
After 10 years	The risk of lung cancer is cut in half



# Nutrition



## What Can Employers Do?

- Have contests with employees to see who can track the most physical activity throughout the week.
- If employees are okay with it, conduct a weight loss contest in the office.
- Encourage employees to take a 5 minute stretch and walking break for every 45 minutes they are sitting.
- Encourage healthy snacking. Make sure that snacks around the office also include fresh fruits, nuts, granola bars, etc. Make sure vending machines have healthy options as well!

Two-thirds of the adults you see are considered overweight or obese, which means most likely two thirds of your staff is also overweight or obese. Overweight and obesity cause secondary diseases which are expensive to manage and can increase absenteeism. Good nutrition and dietary habits help to prevent chronic health problems like cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and cholesterol, Type 2 Diabetes, and some cancers, saving an employer thousands of dollars a year.

## Benefits for Employers

- **Reduce absenteeism.** Employees that are overweight or obese have higher rates of job absenteeism. Normal weight employees have 3-4 sick days annually. Overweight and obese employees take 5-9 sick days annually. This costs U.S. business \$4.3 billion annually.
- **Increase productivity.** Lower productivity due to overweight and obesity in workers costs an average \$506 per employee. Wellness programming including nutrition education improves productivity, potentially saving 150% on return on investment.
- **Reduce workers' compensation costs.** Workers' compensation tends to skyrocket if your employees are overweight or obese. A worker in a healthy weight range will cost the company about \$7,503 annually. An overweight or obese worker has been shown to cost \$51,091 in workers' compensation annually.
- **Reduce health care costs.** Wellness programs with nutrition education included have demonstrated a 29-66% drop in hospital admissions and a reduction of over \$1,600 in health care costs per year per participating employee.
- **Return on investment.** Wellness programs with nutrition education included have demonstrated for every \$1 spent on disease management programming saved \$3.60 and every dollar spent on lifestyle management programming saved \$.50.

## Benefits for Employees

- **Better health.** Poor nutrition causes increased risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and arthritis. Seventy percent of all diseases are chronic diseases.
- **Encouraging results.** Nutrition and exercise workplace programs that last only 6-12 months improve weight by three pounds during programming.
- **Improved morale.** Nutrition initiatives can offer opportunities for teamwork, culture building, and increased employee buy-in to the business.

*38% of all deaths can be prevented by modifying 4 main health behaviors (tobacco use, physical activity, diet, and alcohol use). Nutrition education can encompass 3 of these areas.*

## Did you know?

Nutrition programming comes in many forms. Short-burst group nutrition education sessions (15-30 minutes), individual appointments with a registered dietitian, at-home phone-based counseling, and online nutrition education and dietary behavior tracking may suit your company's needs. Registered dietitians can develop programs tailored to each workplace, including needs assessment and outcomes analysis.

Women with children are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. workforce, having increased 80% over the last 20 years. Fifty-five percent of women with children under the age of 3 are employed, and 78% of them are full-time. More than 70 percent of all new mothers in the U.S. today choose to breastfeed to give their babies important nutrition and health benefits. Implementing a [breastfeeding-friendly workplace policy](#) is a low-cost and simple way to protect your bottom line while protecting family health.

## Benefits for Employers

### Lower Absenteeism Rates

- One-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula-fed infants

### Lower Health Care Costs

- For every 1,000 babies not breastfed, there is an excess of 2,033 physician visits, 212 days in the hospital, and 609 prescriptions

### Lower Turnover Rates

- A study of multiple companies with lactation support programs found an average retention rate of 94.2%
  - Earlier return from maternity leave
  - Higher employee productivity and morale
  - Higher employer loyalty
  - Recognition as a “family friendly” business

## Benefits for Employees

### Health Impact on Infants

- Breastfeeding lowers the risk of ear infections, respiratory infections, and digestive disorders.
- Daycare attendance is associated with double the odds of needing antibiotic therapy; infants breastfed at least 4 months significantly decreased those odds.
- Protective effect of breastfeeding on children in daycare persists well into child’s second year of life

### Health Impact on Mothers

- Faster recovery from pregnancy and childbirth
- Lower risk of breast cancer and osteoporosis
- Satisfaction she is giving her baby the best start in life possible



## Who’s Doing It?

### Department of Water and Power

Although 80 percent of its employees are male, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power found that a lactation support program for mothers, fathers, and partners of male employees made a dramatic difference in reducing turnover and absenteeism rates for both male and female workers.

They also found that 83 percent of employees were more positive about the company as a result of the program, and 67 percent intended to make it their long-term employer.

### CIGNA

CIGNA reported in a 2-year study of 343 employees an annual savings of \$240,000 in health care expenses, 62 percent fewer prescriptions, and \$60,000 in reduced absenteeism rates.

## The 4 Essentials for a Lactation Support Program

The basic needs of breastfeeding employees are minimal, which makes a lactation support program inexpensive.

### Breastfeeding employees need:

1. A private place to be able to express milk in privacy during the work period
2. A flexible schedule to express milk two or three times a day (primarily using allotted breaks)
3. Information on how to successfully combine breastfeeding with employment (contact your local WIC office)
4. Supportive supervisors and staff

For more information, contact your local public health department, local Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) office, or visit the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration Business Case for Breastfeeding website: <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/pregnancyandbeyond/breastfeeding/>.

Faced with high healthcare costs, many employers are turning to worksite wellness programs to help employees adopt healthier lifestyles and lower their risk of developing costly chronic diseases while improving worker productivity.

These local companies successfully implemented wellness programs with the intention of promoting good health through prevention, reducing chronic illness, and improving productivity outcomes.

## Local Spotlight: ForTec Medical Streetsboro, Ohio

ForTec Medical mobilizes surgical technologies to hospitals, surgery centers, and physician offices on an as-needed basis, enabling hospitals and health care professionals to avoid costly capital investments, technology obsolescence risk, and staffing headaches. ForTec Medical is located in Streetsboro, Ohio and has about 300 employees nationwide who are offered wellness programs as part of the employee benefits package.

The company receives a grant from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) through its Workplace Wellness Grant Program to conduct annual health risk assessments (HRA) and biometric screenings (BMS) and for all employees and to promote physical activity and nutrition to employees.

To successfully fulfill the grant objectives, ForTec Medical contracted with a wellness program vendor to conduct HRA and BMS for employees. The company also contracts with Blue Sky Green Fields to deliver fresh produce directly to employees at work.

To promote physical activity, the company provided all employees with MOVband activity monitors that track a wider variety of movement than just walking steps. This helped employees to gain awareness of their daily activity, encouraging them to move more often. Tracking movement also motivated employees to set and achieve activity goals.

Incentives help too. ForTec Medical instituted an activity challenge, which 186 employees participated in last year, which won employees five vacation days upon achievement of the activity goal. Management also encourages staff to increase activity while at work by allowing walking breaks within the building and offering \$25 gift card for reaching the goal of 12,000 steps within a specified period.

The company also provides health education by offering monthly lunches to staff where a specific health topic is presented and discussed. The company website also rotates health topics monthly.

Because ForTec Medical's BWC-funded wellness program began in 2014, the results of the first year are not yet available for the team to know the impact of the program. However, some individual success stories shared by staff include those who have visited their health care provider because of their HRA results, which ultimately lowers health care costs by seeking health care earlier when health issues are less severe and more easily treated. Last year, the company had 66 employees participate in the wellness program; the 2015 goal is 76 employees. The main challenge that ForTec faces is getting people motivated.

The annual cost for the wellness program is about \$20,000. The MOVband activity monitors cost \$1,000 on annual basis and monthly snacks for lunch meetings cost about \$500 per year. The company is interested in adding gym memberships to its wellness program package.

The Wellness Committee Leader highly recommends that employers start a committee for the wellness program that will guide the implementation and evaluation of activities.



# Local Spotlight: Robinson Health Affiliates

## Portage County, Ohio

Robinson Health Affiliates, Inc. (RHA) works in close cooperation with Robinson Memorial Hospital and its medical staff to operate allergy, immunology, rheumatology, family medicine, internal medicine, and obstetrics and gynecology practices throughout Portage County. With 15 office locations in Portage County, RHA currently has 160 employees.

To begin a wellness program across multiple locations can be challenging. To meet that challenge, RHA formed a Wellness Champion Committee to help design and implement the variety of wellness programs offered to employees across office locations.

The company's nutrition program, *Colorful Choices*, encourages employees to eat at least five servings of produce every day with a minimum of three vegetables. The activity runs for 20 days, during which time employees track fruit and vegetable consumption by color. The winner receives a \$5 fruit smoothie gift card. This program has about 95 participants; families of employees are also encouraged to participate.

The company's "Get Fit on Route 66" program encourages employees to track physical activity and mark off 1 "mile" for each minute of exercise. Participants win a t-shirt when they complete the challenge. RHA has also implemented a multi-activity walking program and a behavioral awareness program to help staff cope with and reduce stress levels.

Additionally, the company holds an annual health day where they conduct biometric screening (BMS) and health risk assessment (HRA) for all of its employees.

RHA initially set a goal to have 25% of staff participate in the wellness program; currently, 80% of its employees participate. This success is due in part to insurance requirements for individual health and activity standards.

# Local Spotlight: L'Oreal USA S/D, Inc.

## Streetsboro, Ohio

L'Oreal USA S/D, Inc., the French-based cosmetic and beauty product company, has a regional product distribution center consisting of 150 employees in Streetsboro, Ohio. L'Oreal USA offers its employees health and wellness programs as part of the employee benefits package to promote a healthier lifestyle.

One of the most popular wellness programs is the weight loss challenge, which promotes healthier eating and exercise habits. The participant who loses the most weight by the end of the challenge receives a \$100 reward. Actionable tips and promotional information about exercise and healthy eating choices are channeled to employees via several means, including emails and wall postings in the cafeteria. In 2014, 56 employees participated in the program.

L'Oreal's health programs focus on disease prevention. Blood pressure screenings and free influenza immunizations are offered during the winter season. The company has also contracted with a local health club that offers its employees discounted rates. Another initiative is creatively tailored to fit the cosmetics and beauty branding of L'Oreal: The company offers its employees free skin cancer screenings.

Management has noticed several benefits since beginning the health and wellness programs. Employee absenteeism decreased, and employees started to make healthier food choices in the cafeteria. The skin cancer screening introduced last year helped to identify some early cases of melanoma among a few employees, allowing them to take necessary measures.

The company has set an annual health and wellness program budget of \$5,200 for purchase of medical supplies and \$300 for each of the activities conducted, with some programs being offered directly through the corporate offices. Despite the success of their wellness programs, limited funding prohibits the company from expanding health and wellness programs to include other desirable topics, such as tobacco cessation. Until more funds become available, they will continue implementing the beneficial programs already in place.

# Where to start

## 3 STEPS TO GET STARTED



1. Identify your employees' health status and help them to know their own risks by offering biometric screenings and health risk assessments.
2. Focus on participation, engagement, incentivizing and satisfaction for every program you implement. Make it easy, fun, social, rewarding, and get the leader involved.



3. Make a wellness plan, set goals and objectives, and include evaluation and metrics. Plans and goals should be evaluated quarterly, bi-annually and annually, year after year, and adjusted as needed to get the desired results.

## Introducing a workforce wellness program can lead to:

- A healthier workforce
- Increased employee productivity
- Decreased employee absenteeism
- Lower employer healthcare costs
- Increased employee morale

## 5 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM MORE EFFECTIVE

1. Invest in wellness by investing in initiatives such as: physical fitness programs and subsidized club memberships, health education and information, health screenings and assessments, smoking cessation and chronic disease prevention programs, on-site or telephonic coaching, and healthy food options and snacks in vending machines and cafeterias.
2. Eliminate barriers to wellness by being flexible with work schedules, providing access to resources, offering healthier food options in food areas and free wellness initiative options.
3. Address multiple components of health such as financial, employee assistance programs, career counseling and access to emotional/mental health services.
4. Hire people who care about wellness and can assist with the initiation and growth of wellness programs.
5. Resolve the issue of stress both in and out of the workplace.

***“For all individuals, some activity is better than none. Physical activity is safe for almost everyone, and the health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks.”***

- CDC Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans



# Employee buy-in

## Getting Employees Active & Involved

The first step to achieving a successful wellness program is to determine what the employees want and need to improve their health and safety at work. By involving employees in the wellness program planning process, they build ownership of the program interventions and bring in better ideas about the issues at hand, which will then allow for easier resolution of the issues.

### 5 KEYS TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

1. Lead by example by encouraging leaders to participate in wellness programming.
2. Show the company cares about well-being by communicating the importance of a healthy lifestyle and introducing practices that enhance well-being.
3. Utilize wellness leaders and wellness ambassadors within the employee pool to encourage participation and outreach.
4. Open up a conversation about well-being issues by asking employees for their input, giving them the ability to approach leadership about concerns about wellness issues. Hold meetings to communicate program initiatives, and keep employees informed about all programming and progress.
5. Survey employees to determine their wants, needs, and willingness to improve their health and wellness at work (see the Stages of Change section on page 17).



### Did you know?

**Surveying employees about their needs and interests is key!**

Surveying employees will:

- Help identify the goals of the wellness program
- Determine the outcomes employees want and need
- Discover what needs the employees find most important
- Potentially pinpoint a particular problem
- Highlight important issues and/or concerns
- Provide information on how motivated employees are to change



# Getting Started With Health Risk Assessment & Biometric Screening

## Top 15 Modifiable Health Risks that Lead to Disease

*\*Major predictors of future illness*

- Inactivity \*
- Tobacco use \*
- Poor diet \*
- Overweight/Obesity\*
- High blood pressure\*
- High cholesterol/triglycerides\*
- Diabetes
- Stress\*
- Substance abuse\*
- Alcohol consumption
- Back pain
- Poor standard of care\*
- Disease/ pharmaceutical compliance\*
- Lack of sleep\*
- Lack of health screening\*

### Health Risk Assessment (HRA)

A HRA is a tool that assesses the individual health risks of your employees. A typical HRA asks the following information:

- Demographic information (age, gender, race)
- Lifestyle behaviors (exercise, smoking, alcohol, diet, stress)
- Biometric data (height, weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar)
- Attitudes and willingness to change behaviors and improve health

### Biometric Screening (BMS)

A BMS is a measurement of physical characteristics that measures the following and is done by a finger stick:

- Total cholesterol, HDL (Good cholesterol), LDL (bad cholesterol)
- Triglycerides (fat in the blood)
- Blood glucose (sugar)
- Height and Weight
- Blood pressure

### Benefits for Employers

- Gives baseline aggregate health risk data for your company
- Assists with strategic planning and design of a worksite wellness program, and redefining of health plan services
- Provides information for cardiovascular and physical activity screening, identification of individuals for disease management services, awareness education, and interventions
- Engages the employees in the health management process

### Benefits for Employees

- Provides the individual with a snapshot of their current health status, concrete information about current health, and monitors health status over time
- Provides information on readiness to change health behaviors and information on what behaviors need improvement
- Engagement in their own health management process and ability to work with management on health initiatives

**Be aware that your benefits provider may offer an HRA to their clients on their web portal. They would be able to then give you an aggregate report on the health metrics for your group of employees. Individual employee reports are not available for anyone except for the individual employee to see. Your benefits provider may also offer biometric screenings at a reduced cost.**

## Employees and Risk Factors

Employees fall into one of 3 risk categories: High, Moderate or Low. The goal is to move the high risk individuals to moderate risk and the moderate risk to low risk, while keeping those who are low risk abiding by their current healthy lifestyles. Below is an example of what each risk category will cost.

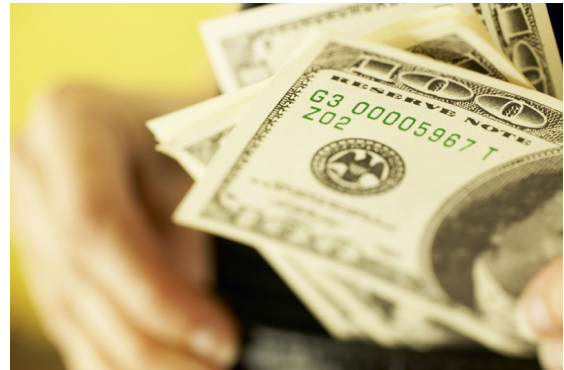
A risk factor is any attribute, characteristic or exposure that increases a person's chances of developing a disease, chronic condition or being injured. The leading causes of death among individuals age 45 and older are: 1. Heart disease. 2. Cancer. 3. COPD (Lung Disease) 4. Unintentional Injuries. 5. Stroke. These diseases are lifestyle-related, meaning that they are caused by risk behaviors associated with how an individual lives and the habits they have formed.

Risk	Number of Risk Factors	% Population	% of Health Care Cost	Cost per Person	Sick Days	Non-Productive Days
High Risk	5 or more	10-17%	Up to 56%	\$9085	3.6	28.9
Moderate Risk	3 to 4	20-30%	Up to 29%	\$4635	2.4	12.0
Low Risk	0 to 2	50-63%	Up to 15%	\$2946	1.6	5.1



# Workplace Wellness Grant Program

To meet the challenges of obesity, rising incidence of chronic diseases, and the aging workforce, BWC has established the Workplace Wellness Grant Program to assist employers with the creation and implementation of a workplace wellness program. Scientific research has shown that the aforementioned challenges contribute to increased incidence and cost of workplace accidents and illnesses. The program's goal is to limit and control the escalating cost of workers' compensation claims by helping employers develop health promotion programs for their employees. The secondary goals are to reduce health-care costs for employers, as well as improve the health and well-being of the workforce.



## Funds

Employers participating in the grant fund may receive \$300 per participating employee over a four-year period, which equates to a maximum of \$15,000 per policy.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$100	\$75	\$75	\$50	\$300 per employee

## How to apply

**Step 1** – Contact your local BWC service office, Employer Services Division to find a safety and health consultant who will verify your eligibility and determine the availability of funds (1-800-OHIOBWC or ohiobwc.com).

**Step 2** – Review program requirements.

**Step 3** – Complete the following and mail to Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Workplace Wellness Grant Program, 13430 Yarmouth Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147-8310. All signatures must be original.

- o Application and narrative
- o Legal agreement/contract
- o Safety management self-assessment

**Step 4** – Below is a list of three forms required to receive grant funds from the state. All signatures must be original. Mail all three completed forms to Ohio Shared Services, Attn: Vendor Maintenance, P.O. Box 182880, Columbus, OH 43218-2880. If you have questions, you may contact Ohio Shared Services at:

Phone: 1-877-644-6771

Fax: 614-485-1039

Email: vendor@ohio.gov

- o Vendor form (As a grant recipient the state considers you a vendor)
- o Direct deposit form
- o W-9 tax form

**Step 5** – Contact safety and health consultant from step 1 who will review your application with you in person or by phone prior to submission.

**Step 6** – BWC will evaluate the application and send a letter to you stating whether you are approved or denied for the grant program.

# Embracing the Long View: Stages of Change

With healthcare costs continually on the rise, it makes sense why many employers want fast and effective solutions to improve the health and wellness of their employees. However, the truth is that:

- change rarely happens overnight
- it's not always easy for people to change even when they're motivated to do so
- no matter what you do, some people don't want to change

If you're an employer, realizing these three things can be frustrating, but there's good news! Understanding the Stages of Change will help.

The Stages of Change is a great model and tool for employers to more accurately understand how behavior change works, especially in employee health & wellness programs.

People move through these stages when modifying a behavior. Only about 20% of employees are typically ready to take action, but assisting them through the stages by offering wellness initiatives is the best way to transition them from being high risk to moderate risk and finally to low risk.

*Movement through the stages is dependent upon the motivation of the individual and the barriers they face.*

*The movement is ongoing and takes time.*

*Each individual progresses through each phase differently and at their own pace.*



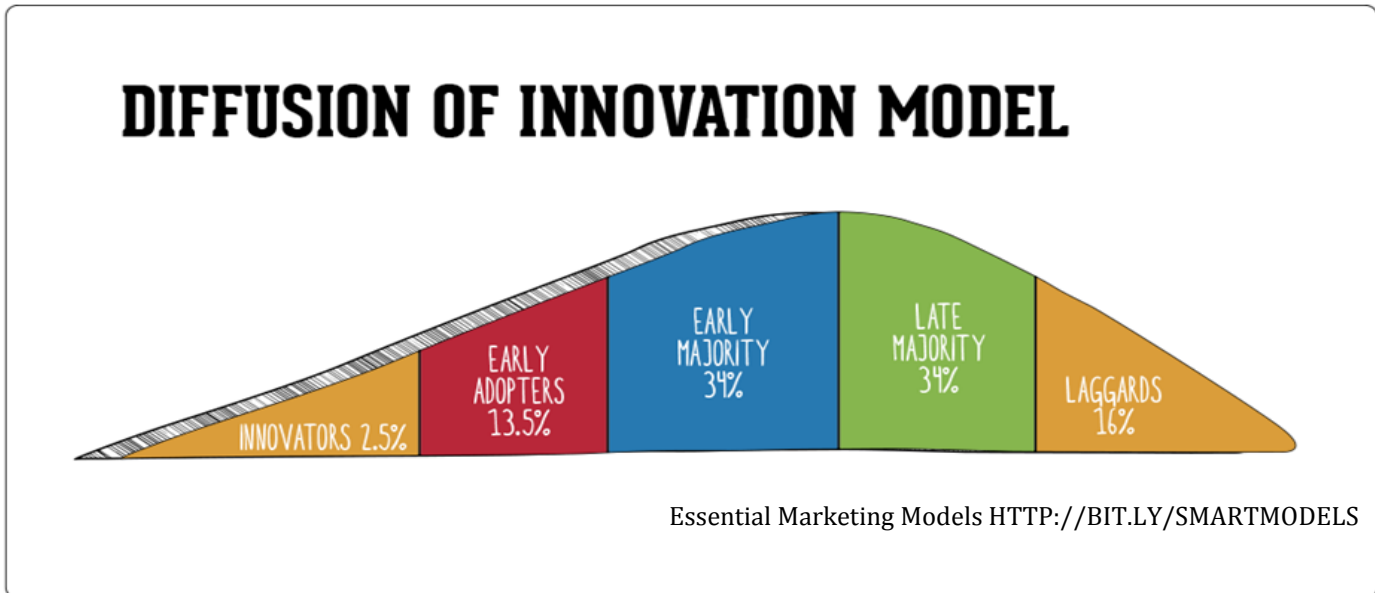
## Starting Point



Stages of Change: Transtheoretical Model, (Prochaska & DeClemente, 1983; Prochaska, & DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992)

# Embracing the Long View: Going the Distance

Employees will not typically adopt your health & wellness program all at the same time. In fact, as you can see in the diagram below, the longer the program exists and continues to engage employees, the more likely they will be to participate!



**Innovators** are people who want to be the first to try the program. They are venturesome and interested in new ideas. They are willing to take risks. Very little needs to be done to appeal to this population. *These are usually the low-risk employees.*

**Early Adopters** are people who embrace change opportunities. They enjoy leadership roles and embrace change. Strategies to appeal to this population include how-to manuals, information sheet, online information. They do not need to be convinced to change. *These are usually low-risk employees.*

**Early Majority** are people who are rarely leaders, but they adopt new ideas before the average person. They need to see evidence that the program works before they are willing to adopt it. Strategies to appeal to this population include success stories and evidence of the program's effectiveness. *These are usually moderate-risk employees.*

**Late Majority** people are skeptical of change and will only adopt the program after it's been tried by the majority. Strategies to appeal to this population include information on how many other people have tried the program and been successful. *These are usually moderate- to high- risk employees.*

**Laggards** are people who are bound by tradition and are very conservative. They are very skeptical of changes and are the hardest group to bring on board. Strategies to appeal to this group include statistics, fear appeals, pressure from people in other groups. *These are usually high-risk employees.*

# Portage County Safety Council

**Earn up to a 4% BWC premium rebate through safety education!**

Thousands of Ohio employers find value and workers' compensation premium savings by actively participating in their local safety councils. And you can join them!\*

## Rebate Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for the BWC Safety Council rebate, you must meet the following requirements:

1. Join your local safety council by July 31, 2015
2. Attend 10 safety council meetings\*\*
3. Send a qualified senior-level manager to a safety council sponsored meeting
4. Submit semiannual workplace accident reports for the 2015 calendar year

\*\* At least eight through the local safety council. You can get credit for up to two meetings through attendance at BWC's safety training courses or industry-specific training.

## BWC Safety Councils can help you:

- Earn up to a 4% BWC premium rebate!
- Learn techniques for increasing safety, health, and wellness in your workplace!
- Learn how to better manage your workers' compensation program!
- Network with other employers in your community!
- Access useful, money-saving workers' comp and risk management information!



\*The rebate offer excludes self-insuring employers and state agencies.

Limitations apply to a professional employer organization and its clients. BWC encourages all employers to become active safety council members.

## Potential Rebates For Employers who are Active Members of a Safety Council

- Employers meeting all safety council rebate eligibility requirements that are not enrolled in a group-rating program will earn a 2% participation rebate on their premium and the potential of a additional 2% performance bonus.
- Employers meeting all safety council rebate eligibility requirements that are also enrolled in a group-experience-rating program have the potential to earn a 2% performance bonus.
- Employers meeting all safety council rebate eligibility requirements that are also enrolled in a group-retrospective-rating program will earn a 2-percent participation rebate.

*To earn a performance bonus, employers must reduce either the severity or frequency of injuries in their workplace by 10% or remain at zero.*

## For More Information...

To learn more about the Portage County Safety Council, please call Mike Thompson at 330-296-0024 ext. 3, email [portagesafetycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:portagesafetycouncil@gmail.com), or visit [www.PortageSafetyCouncil.com](http://www.PortageSafetyCouncil.com).

For more information regarding safety councils outside of the Portage County Area, please call 1-800-644-6292. You may also visit [www.bwc.ohio.gov](http://www.bwc.ohio.gov) and click on safety services, training services and safety councils.

# Portage County Workforce Health & Wellness Coalition

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In response to the Safety Council Health & Wellness Initiative set forth by the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, the Portage County Workforce Health & Wellness Coalition was established. Our mission is to empower local employers to improve the health & wellness of their employees by increasing awareness and providing relevant workforce health & wellness information.

The content of this publication is brought to you by the following contributors:

## CO-FOUNDERS

### **Mike Thompson, MBA**

*Manager-Portage County Safety Council  
Employer Relations & EIP Training Coordinator  
Family & Community Services, Inc.*

### **Becky Lehman, MPH**

*Director of Health Education and Promotion  
Public Information Officer  
Portage County Health Department*

### **Nicholas Coia**

*Industrial Safety Consultant Specialist  
Ohio BWC - Canton Service Office*

### **Karen Towne, MSN, RN**

*Accreditation Coordinator  
Child and Family Health Services Project Director  
Portage County Health Department*

## COALITION MEMBERS

### **Amy F. Lee, MD, MPH**

*Professor & Director  
CEOMPH Program  
Dept. of Family and Community Medicine  
Northeast Ohio Medical University*

### **Julie Robine, MPH, PTA**

*Lifestyle Coach & Corporate Wellness Consultant  
Advanced Wellness*

### **Helen Jane Eichler**

*Health Educator, Working Partners  
Robinson Health Affiliates*

### **Kim MK Trowbridge, MEd, CHES**

*Program Coordinator and Faculty Member  
CEOMPH Program  
Dept. of Family and Community Medicine  
Northeast Ohio Medical University*

### **Janet Hayward, PT**

*Owner  
Onsite Physical Rehab*

## OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

### **Natalie Caine-Bish, PhD, RD, LD**

*Associate Professor, Nutrition  
College of Education, Health &  
Human Services  
Kent State University*

### **Jacqueline Telmanik**

*Dietetic Intern  
College of Education, Health &  
Human Services  
Kent State University*

### **Lucine Saleh, MBA**

*Graduate Student  
CEOMPH Program  
Dept. of Family and Community Medicine  
Northeast Ohio Medical University*

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