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An Equal Opportunity Employer

More companies are implementing wellness programs to reduce injuries, health care costs and long-term disability. Employers are realizing reduced absenteeism, higher productivity and increased morale and loyalty, due to wellness programs.

Preventable illness makes up approximately 80% of the burden of illnesses and 90% of all health care costs. Employers can reduce preventable illnesses and reduce health care costs by providing wellness activities for their employees and employee families

Here are a few thoughts to consider:

Implement a Worksite Wellness Program: Begin by assessing the needs of your employees. Are your employees overweight? Do a majority of your employees use tobacco? Do employees want a place to exercise on breaks or lunch hours? Does your cafeteria or do your vending machines have healthy food selections?

Once you have collected some basic information, the next step is to make a plan. Simply list the outcomes you desire, such as reducing the number of employees who smoke or increasing the number who are able to reduce their cholesterol levels. Next, choose activities that are appropriate for your desired outcome/goal. Activities geared towards smoking cessation, increased physical activity and better nutritional habits are typical of a worksite wellness program.

After you have your wellness program in place, periodically check whether your employees have made improvements in the areas you and they wanted to address. You may need to refocus your efforts or reassess employee wellness needs.

Engage More Employees: A great way to get employees involved in your worksite wellness program is to offer incentives. For example, if an employee decides to participate in an organized walk during lunch breaks, reward that employee with a pedometer so they can keep track of their steps during the lunch time walk. If that employee sticks with the program and participates three days each week for a total of six weeks, offer another reward. Making the rewards larger for activities which require increased commitment is a great way to get and keep employees involved.

Halt Rising Health Care Costs: Did you know employee wellness is considered a potential high return on investment for employers? In fact, research suggests employers save on average \$3.48 in reduced health care costs and \$5.82 in lower absenteeism costs for every dollar spent on employee wellness. Employees who live healthier lifestyles have reduced sick leave, improved work performance, decreased health insurance costs, and increased productivity .

Earlier this year, Governor Mitch Daniels signed into law a tax credit for small business employers who recognize the importance of worksite wellness. By bringing worksite wellness to your business, you have a unique opportunity to utilize this tax credit and improve the lives of your employees.

To learn more about worksite wellness as well as the tax credit, attend Governor Daniels' INShape Indiana Health Summit on October 15 at Purdue University. This year's summit is titled "Live Healthy. Work Healthy" and is focused entirely on worksite wellness. To register, visit www.inshape.IN.gov/ and click on the Health Summit link.

Some additional resources that can be accessed online include:

- Wellness Councils of America - www.welcoa.org
- Health Solution Services - www.healthsolutions.com
- US Corporate Wellness - www.uscorporatewellness.com

Epidemiology Resource Center
2525 N. Shadeland Ave. Suite E3, Indianapolis, IN 46219
317.356.7190 ext. 253

Laboratories
550 West 16th Street, Suite B, Indianapolis, IN 46202
317.921.5500

Weights & Measures
2525 N. Shadeland Ave. Suite D3, Indianapolis, IN 46219
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