

Supporting Healthy Practices at Work

Building Healthy Businesses: An Alaska Guide



▶ Questions



▶ Costs



▶ Ideas



▶ Problems



▶ Resources





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Purpose

Work time and profit lost to illness and injury affects the bottom line of both large and small businesses in Alaska. *An Alaska Guide to Building Healthy Businesses: Supporting Healthy Practices at Work* is designed to help you develop a worksite wellness program that can best meet your company's needs and help your employees make positive changes in their health behaviors. Regardless of the size of your business, you can develop a program that can effectively inform and educate employees about their health and provide a safe and healthy work environment that encourages healthy behaviors.

An Alaska Guide offers a wealth of ideas for worksite wellness strategies, activities, and resources. Each chapter addresses a common chronic condition or health behavior that employees often face: i.e. smoking, nutrition, high blood pressure, diabetes. These chapters identify ways to reduce the costs of a disease or behavior to your business through a variety of health promotion activities.

The strategies and activities presented here are just suggestions to get you started. Many other activities and ideas can be found on the web or through commercial vendors. For examples of worksite health promotion activities that have been successful in Alaska businesses, see *Take Heart Alaska! Promoting Health at Work: A Resource Guide*, available on the web at: partners.hss.state.ak.us/takeheart/pdf_files/Promoting%20Health%20At%20Work.pdf.

Where do we begin?

Deciding how to implement a wellness program at your business can be overwhelming. The Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) made this worthwhile job easier by researching successful programs to find the common elements that they share. WELCOA then developed a step by step approach for putting a wellness program in place, which is called the **Wellness Council of America's Seven Steps to Success**. All seven steps are necessary and vital components for building a comprehensive, worksite wellness program that leads to results.

The following steps have been adapted from an article in *Well Informed*, a WELCOA publication, and the WELCOA “Well Workplace University for Small Businesses” workshop. The original article was written by Dr. David Hunnicutt and Angie Deming and is available on the web at: www.welcoa.org/membership/WI_V1_N1.pdf?PHPSESSID=2d3eef222079d27fe4a86d169fe8f4ff.

- 1. Commit to a company wellness program:** Company leaders must choose to make the health of their workforce a priority. Company leaders need to:
 - ▶ assure that the health promotion initiative has adequate resources (financial and staff time),
 - ▶ connect workforce health promotion objectives to business outcomes,
 - ▶ integrate health promotion practices into organizational processes,
 - ▶ enact company policies and procedures to support the workforce health initiative, and
 - ▶ champion the wellness program and provide a positive example.

- 2. Create a company wellness team:** Although company leaders are key to a company wellness program and essential for championing the cause, they may not be able to devote the time and attention needed for its success. The best strategy is to create a company wellness team that includes workers who are strongly interested in the idea from all groups in the company (such as owners, human resources, information technology, group leaders, line staff). The second best strategy is identifying a key person to lead the health promotion initiative, and then assure that others in the company actively support the health promotion initiative and its leader.

- 3. Collect data:** Information about your company is important to help plan and implement a company wellness program that meets the needs of the organization and interests of the employees. Collect data to help identify:
 - i. *What are your employees' health interests and concerns?* Use an employee survey to collect this information.
 - ii. *What are the health problems affecting your workforce? How do these problems affect your company?* Sources for this information include employee demographic data (age, gender, race, marital status, etc.) and company-level reports from health risk appraisals, health fairs, or other health screening events.

4. **Craft an annual plan:** Develop a measurable and detailed description of health promotion activities that will occur over the next year. Many annual plans include a vision statement, goals, objectives, an implementation timeline, an itemized budget, strategies for reporting progress to company leaders and workers, and an evaluation design. (See page 7 for more information.)
5. **Choose effective activities:** Based on your data and plan, choose an activity, or activities, that best meets the goals and objectives for your worksite. This guidance and the *Take Heart Alaska Promoting Health at Work Resource Guide* are intended to provide examples of activities and strategies that have been successful elsewhere. See Appendix I for additional information on planning activities and Appendix II for a planning form to work through your activities.
6. **Create a healthy environment:** Make the healthy choice the easy choice! It is hard to change behavior, no matter how motivated your people might be. Changes in the worksite environment can increase an employee's ability to make positive changes in their health behaviors. Examples of creating a healthy environment include creating a smoke free workplace, offering flex-time to support physical activity or offering low-fat options in your cafeteria or vending machines.
7. **Constantly evaluate and report outcomes:** Examine and report on the strengths and weaknesses of your health promotion projects. Knowing how well your projects have done is important:
 - ▶ for improving future projects, and
 - ▶ for maintaining and increasing support for the initiative by company leaders and the workforce.Evaluation includes paying attention to what the health promotion project was supposed to do, how many people participated in project activities, how many of them changed their behavior, and how many kept the new behavior over time. Also, look for non-project events in your company or community that may have influenced the project's success.

Although all seven steps are important, this document contains ideas from lessons learned by others and will be particularly helpful for the 5th and 6th steps. Remember, completing steps 1-4 first will increase your health promotion program's chances of success, and you need step 7 to maintain and increase those successes.

Health Risk Appraisal

Health Risk Appraisals (HRAs) are useful tools for helping employees understand how their health habits are impacting their health. They are surveys that ask detailed questions about behavior and health status. They also often request information about blood pressure, cholesterol, and other health indicators. Results are returned to the individual and, if an HRA sponsor has a large enough pool of responses to protect confidentiality, an aggregated report on health status and behaviors of the group is given to the sponsor. Results are used by (a) high risk coaching services to identify individuals with particular health risks, who might benefit from personal attention, (b) individuals to make specific changes to improve their health status, and (c) sponsors (companies) to design worksite wellness programs. Most HRAs are designed to be completed using a computer and the internet. There are many vendors who sell HRAs and a search of the internet will supply you with a list of potential vendors.

There are some data that suggest that employees who take an HRA improve their risk even if they do not participate in another other wellness activities.

Businesses have found that group HRA reports provide very good data on the health risks that pose the biggest problems for their employees. A strategy used by some companies to increase the likelihood that they will obtain a group report is to offer the HRA to employee spouses.

Because of its value in helping employees change their high risk health behavior, offering an annual HRA is recommended if there are funds available. If you offer an HRA, consider:

- ▶ offering an incentive for participating
- ▶ providing computer access in a private area
- ▶ offering a paper and pencil as well as computer version
- ▶ the need for HRA versions in languages other than English
- ▶ using aggregate data for planning the worksite health program. (This is covered in the steps to success.)

Crafting an annual plan

This process need not be lengthy or painful. There are a few steps that can guide you through the process.

1. Decide on your vision for your company and how the wellness plan figures into that vision. One way of looking at a vision statement is that it is part one of a two-part description of the overall business intent.

- ▶ Vision Statements describe the future: where you are going or where you want to go.
- ▶ Mission Statements describe today: why you exist today and /or what you are doing to pursue your vision of the future.

Together they provide direction for the business by focusing your attention on doing things day-to-day to accomplish your mission, while taking steps to pursue your vision of the future - your long-term business intent.

2. Now that you have the vision, decide on what your goals are for accomplishing that vision. You might think of having between 1-4 goals per year. When you think of goals, think of what you want to change and how you will measure the change. Examples of goals are:

- ▶ Reduce the % of associates that report job stress from 44% to 39% by September 2007 and 34% by September 2008” as measured by the HRA
- ▶ Engage at least 80% of the employees in a wellness activity during 2007.

3. Once you know what your goals are you can plan your strategies. Appendix I and II can help you develop a plan that will be effective in accomplishing your goals.

Employee privacy and worksite health promotion

Employee privacy protection is a key component in successful worksite health promotion programs.

From an employee's perspective, his or her employer COULD have access to highly intimate information, from:

- ▶ Health Risk Appraisals – identify employees with particular health risks or conditions. A complete Health Risk Appraisal includes blood test results, which may be from a worksite health fair.
- ▶ Employee interest surveys – employees tell you what they want.
- ▶ Health insurance records – medical claims data includes specific information about the pharmaceuticals, diagnoses and procedures employees have had.

Some employees don't want employers to have certain health-related information about them. They avoid taking a Health Risk Appraisal, participating in an employee interest survey and, sometimes, using certain health insurance benefits to make sure that their employer cannot learn these things. These concerns have arisen from cases in which persons have lost jobs, not been promoted, been laid off, and had benefits denied because of their health. However, it is also true that if your employees choose not to participate, it can undermine your worksite health promotion program's potential for success.

The best way to address these concerns is to include a brief statement about how employee privacy will be assured in your worksite health promotion program announcements (especially those related to the Health Risk Appraisal, employee interest survey and disease- or condition-specific events). Often, the easiest strategy is to use a third party. If your health insurance provider is using an entirely separate company for the Health Risk Appraisals and follow-up - say so. Design your employee interest survey so that responses can be entirely anonymous. Rather than sponsoring a worksite event that is disease-specific and that by participating, an employee could reveal that he or she has a certain health condition – work with your advisors and presenters to alter the program to be relevant and appeal to a larger audience.

Keep employee privacy in mind as you review your worksite safety policies to assure that they incorporate the specific needs of employees with certain health conditions. The best resolution will likely be obtained using a case-by-case approach.

Activities to address specific diseases, conditions and behaviors

This section of the manual includes specific activities for addressing common chronic conditions employees face. These conditions are important because they take a toll on individual lives, and because they have an impact on a business's productivity and medical care cost.

The activities listed will fall into one or more of these areas:

- ▶ Provide employees with health information and resources
- ▶ Create an environment that supports healthy behavior changes
- ▶ Provide opportunities for employees to practice new healthy behaviors

Programs will be most successful when they include activities from all three areas. Use different activities to emphasize the same or a similar message in order to help people change their behavior. *The more times, and the more ways you emphasize a message, the better the chances are that people will hear it, remember it, and do something about it.*

The State of Alaska has many resources available at no or low cost to support your efforts. The contact information for those programs is included below.

Arthritis: (907) 269-8447, arthritis@health.state.ak.us

Cancer: (907) 269-8092, cancer@health.state.ak.us

Diabetes: (907) 269-8035, diabetes@health.state.ak.us

Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention: (907) 465-8670, heartdisease@health.state.ak.us

Obesity Prevention: (907) 269-2020, obesity@health.state.ak.us

Tobacco Control and Prevention: (907) 269-8895, tobacco@health.state.ak.us

Injury Prevention: (907) 465-8632, karen_lawfer@health.state.ak.us

Arthritis

Why should you worry about arthritis?



- ▶ Approximately a quarter of Alaskan adults have been diagnosed with arthritis, and another 19 percent have joint pain or symptoms.
- ▶ Nearly 80 percent of people with arthritis in Alaska are younger than 65 years old.
- ▶ Alaskans with arthritis experience more disability and suffer from chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, and coronary heart disease, more than those who do not have arthritis.

How much does arthritis cost your business?



- ▶ In Alaska, approximately \$129 million in direct medical care costs and indirect lost earnings are paid due to arthritis annually.

What contributes to the high cost of arthritis?



- ▶ Injuries to bones or joints
- ▶ Poor ergonomics
- ▶ Physical inactivity
- ▶ Overweight or obesity

Ways to reduce the costs of arthritis to your business:



- ▶ Create a safe work environment (page 14)
- ▶ Support correct ergonomics in your workplace (page 14)
- ▶ Help employees with arthritis increase their physical activity (page 15)
- ▶ Support employee weight loss efforts (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 48)

Create a safe work environment

- ▶ Review and follow OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) Standards and other regulating agencies' guidelines for a safe work environment.
- ▶ Promote awareness of injury prevention through posters, employee newsletters and/or paycheck inserts.
- ▶ Encourage employees to review the Safety and Health Topics on OSHA's website: www.osha.gov/SLTC/index.html.
- ▶ Review your employee health insurance policy to see if there is:
 - Coverage/co-pay for arthritis screening
 - Coverage/co-pay for physical and occupational therapy to promote complete healing from injuries
 - Coverage/co-pay for risk factor counseling
 - Coverage/co-pay for health education classes
 - Coverage/co-pay for medications related to arthritis
 - Coverage/co-pay for regular preventive medical care to diagnosis arthritis early
 - Coverage/co-pay for chronic disease self management, or arthritis self management, courses as a part of the health plan
- ▶ Review your organizational policies for:
 - Compliance with the Americans for Disabilities Act which bans discrimination against people with disabilities, including arthritis
 - Injury prevention policies at work, especially related to falls
 - Frequent employee stretch breaks to prevent stiffness of joints

Support correct ergonomics in your workplace

- ▶ Promote correct ergonomic awareness through posters, employee newsletters and/or paycheck inserts.
- ▶ Invite a local healthcare practitioner to speak on arthritis and prevention, or an occupational therapist to speak on the importance of good ergonomic conditions. A possible format would be the Lunch and Learn approach of 30-60 minutes group sessions.

- Be sure the education is tailored to the literacy level of the workforce.
- Be sure the education is available in the different languages of the workforce.
- ▶ Encourage employees to review the ergonomic eTools on OSHA’s website:
www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/index.html.
- ▶ Review your organizational policies and consider:
 - Providing ergonomic assessment for employees
 - Providing ergonomic tools and equipment for employees
 - Encouraging employees to rearrange work space to allow easier movement
 - Providing height adjustable workstations to allow employees the ability to alternate between sitting and standing

Help employees increase their physical activity

- ▶ Provide information on Arthritis Foundation Exercise and Aquatic Programs (safe exercise for people with arthritis) being offered locally. (See the State of Alaska Arthritis Program website www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/arthritis.)
- ▶ Use your employee newsletter to promote awareness of physical activity and pain relief of arthritis.
- ▶ For more ideas, see the “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section (page 46).

Resources:



- ▶ State of Alaska Arthritis Program: www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/arthritis
- ▶ Arthritis Foundation: www.arthritis.org
- ▶ Self help materials: The Arthritis Helpbook by Kate Lorig, PhD
- ▶ Information about workplace safety and ergonomics: Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration: www.osha.gov/

Asthma

Why should you worry about asthma?



- ▶ Asthma is a chronic, serious and life-threatening disease of the airways of the lungs. If improperly treated, or left untreated, asthma may lead to the long-term decline in health function.
- ▶ Approximately 20 million Americans had asthma in 2003. Of these, 11 million (4 million children under 18) had an asthma attack.
- ▶ Asthma accounted for close to 1,900,000 emergency room visits in the US in 2002, along with approximately 500,000 hospitalizations.
- ▶ 5,000 people die each year from asthma related incidents in the United States.

How much does asthma cost your business?



- ▶ In 2003, asthma accounted for an estimated 24.5 million lost work days in adults.
- ▶ The annual direct health care cost of asthma is approximately \$11.5 billion; indirect costs (e.g. lost productivity) add another \$4.6 billion, for a total of \$16.1 billion dollars. Prescription drugs represented the largest single indirect cost, at \$5 billion. The value of lost productivity due to death represented the largest single indirect cost at \$1.7 billion.

What contributes to asthma?



- ▶ Each person reacts differently to the factors that may trigger asthma, including:
 - Respiratory infections, colds
 - Cigarette smoke
 - Allergic reactions to such allergens as pollen, mold, animal dander, feather, dust, food, and cockroaches
 - Indoor and outdoor air pollutants, including ozone
 - Vigorous exercise
 - Exposure to cold air or sudden temperature change
 - Excitement/stress
 - Physical activity

Ways to reduce the costs of asthma to your business:



- ▶ Create a safe work environment (page 18)
- ▶ Support employees with asthma (page 18)
- ▶ Create a smoke free workplace and encourage all employees to stop smoking and/or be tobacco free (see the “Tobacco Use” section, page 51)

Create a safe work environment

- ▶ Review and follow OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) Standards and other regulating agencies’ guidelines for a safe work environment.
- ▶ Offer a worksite influenza vaccine day to decrease the risk of influenza among all employees, including asthmatics.
- ▶ Encourage employees to review the Safety and Health Topics on OSHA’s website: www.osha.gov/SLTC/index.html
- ▶ Reduce employees exposure to hazardous irritants associated with the development of asthma, as well as triggers for asthma incidents. This includes maintaining clean filters in air conditioning and central heating systems.
- ▶ Provide masks and protective clothing to employees to reduce exposure to hazardous irritants.
- ▶ Fit extractor fans to ensure a better level of air quality.
- ▶ Protect the air your employees breathe by sealing off any equipment that produces hazardous substances.

Support employees with asthma

- ▶ Promote asthma risks, symptoms, and treatment awareness through posters, employee newsletters and/or paycheck inserts.
- ▶ Invite a local healthcare practitioner or the American Lung Association of Alaska to speak on asthma symptoms and prevention.
- ▶ Conduct The FirstAir Asthma Education Program, developed for worksites and consisting of five weekly 1-hour sessions conducted during lunch hours. Materials can be obtained through Martin Mazurek, Corporate Account Executive, Merck Pharmaceutical Company. martin_mazurek@merck.com.
- ▶ Identify potential asthma sufferers and refer them to their health care provider for screening and appropriate treatment as needed.

- ▶ Review your employee health insurance policy to see if there is:
 - Coverage/co-pay for screening
 - Coverage/co-pay for physical and occupational therapy
 - Coverage/co-pay for risk factor counseling,
 - Coverage/co-pay for health education classes
 - Coverage/co-pay for medications related to asthma
 - Coverage/co-pay for regular preventive medical care to diagnosis asthma early
 - Coverage/co-pay for chronic disease self management, or asthma self management, courses as a part of the health plan
- ▶ Work with asthmatic employees to ensure their duties and work areas are free from their specific irritants.

Resources:



- ▶ Allergy and Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics: 800-878-4403, www.aanma.org
- ▶ American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org
- ▶ American Lung Association of Alaska: 907-276-5865, www.aklung.org
- ▶ Asthma Control: www.asthmacontrol.com
- ▶ Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration: www.osha.gov

Cancer

Why should you worry about cancer?



- ▶ Cancer is the number one cause of death among Alaskans.
- ▶ Many cancers can be prevented and detected early.

How much does cancer cost your business?



- ▶ Nationwide in 2005, cancer cost an estimated \$210 billion overall, which included nearly \$136 billion for lost productivity and more than \$70 billion in direct medical costs.

What contributes to cancer?



- ▶ The causes of most cancers are not well understood. However, certain lifestyle choices are known to contribute toward cancer, especially tobacco use, poor diet, and lack of physical activity. The following established causes of cancer are responsible for these estimated total cancer deaths:

Risk Factor	Percentage of Total Cancer Deaths
Tobacco	30
Adult diet/obesity	25
Sedentary lifestyle	10
Occupational factors	5
Family history of cancer	5
Viruses/other biological events	5
Perinatal factors/growth	5
Reproductive factors	5
Alcohol	3
Socioeconomic status	*
Environmental pollution	2
Ionizing/ultraviolet radiation	2
Prescription drugs/medical procedures	2
Salt/other food additives/contaminants	1

* An important underlying factor operating through other specific causes.

W.C. Willett, D. Hunter, and G.A. Colditz, 2000. "Summary – Causes of Cancer". In: Cancer Prevention: The Causes and Prevention of Cancer, Volume 1, G.A. Colditz and D. Hunter (eds), Kluwer Academic Publishers, The Netherlands. p.161-171.

Ways to reduce the costs of cancer to your business:



- ▶ Develop an environment that encourages cancer prevention and early detection (page 22)
- ▶ Create a smoke free workplace and encourage all employees to stop smoking and/or be tobacco free (see the “Tobacco Use” section, page 51)
- ▶ Help employees eat well (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 44)
- ▶ Help employees increase their physical activity (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 46)
- ▶ Support employee weight loss efforts (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 48)

Develop an environment that promotes cancer prevention and early detection

- ▶ Promote cancer prevention and early detection awareness through posters, employee newsletters and/or paycheck inserts. Contact the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org or the Alaska Comprehensive Cancer Control Program at (907) 269-8092 for educational information.
- ▶ Invite a local healthcare practitioner or the American Cancer Society to speak on cancer prevention and early detection awareness. Contact the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org or the Alaska Comprehensive Cancer Control Program at (907) 269-8092 for educational information.
- ▶ Provide a seminar on the relationship between tobacco cessation, physical activity, healthy eating and cancer prevention.
- ▶ Sign up for online group physical activities through the American Cancer Society (ACS) or sponsor a team for local sports activities such as fun runs
 - Participate in team activities around cancer awareness and fundraising, for example the ACS Relay for Life, the American Lung Association Clean Air Challenge.
- ▶ Encourage employees to get cancer screenings regularly and on time as recommended by the American Cancer Society by:
 - Using Mobile Mammography to provide employees convenient onsite screening
 - Providing time or leave for cancer screenings
 - Providing incentives to encourage screening

- Identifying local resources to contract for cancer screenings such as your local hospital's community outreach program or the X-Ray/Radiation Department
- ▶ Review your employee health insurance policy to see if there is:
 - Inclusion of cancer prevention and early detection screenings as recommended by the American Cancer Society.
 - Coverage/Co-pay for medications, including nicotine replacement therapy

Resources



- ▶ Cancer risk calculator: www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu/.
- ▶ The Harvard Center for Cancer Prevention provides information on risk factors for cancer at www.hsph.harvard.edu/cancer/risk/index.htm.
- ▶ The Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation provides information on causes and ways to prevent site specific cancer, e.g. colorectal cancer, breast cancer, etc., at www.preventcancer.org/.
- ▶ The American Cancer Society offers the Great American Eat Right Challenge and the Great American Health Check at: www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/PED_9_Great_American_Eat_Right_Challenge.asp.
- ▶ The American Cancer Society has a program employers can use to send out electronic health messages to employees.
- ▶ Contact the State of Alaska Comprehensive Cancer Control Program for posters and brochures at (907) 269-8092.
- ▶ American Cancer Society – (In the United States, you can call anytime at 1-800-ACS-2345).
- ▶ National Cancer Institute – (1-800-4-CANCER)
- ▶ The Harvard Center for Cancer Prevention provides information on risk factors for cancer at www.hsph.harvard.edu/cancer/risk/index.htm.

Diabetes

Why should you worry about diabetes?



- ▶ Having diabetes is like adding 15 years to your age; heart attack risk with diabetes is the same as for someone who has already had a heart attack.
- ▶ Adults with diabetes have higher rates of work absenteeism and disability.

How much does diabetes cost your business?



- ▶ Diabetes increases your cost of doing business in at least two ways:¹
 - Increased absenteeism: The average male diabetic will miss 11 days of work annually and the average female will lose 8.7 days per year.
 - Increased medical costs, which means a greater health insurance burden. The average annual cost of medical care for your employees with diabetes is **\$13,243** per person as compared to is **\$2,560** for someone without diabetes.

What contributes to diabetes?



- ▶ Developing diabetes
 - Obesity or overweight
 - Physical inactivity
 - Pre-diabetes
 - Having a family member with diabetes
- ▶ Developing a diabetes complication
 - Poor blood glucose control
 - High blood pressure
 - High cholesterol
 - Current tobacco user
 - Obesity or overweight
 - Physical inactivity

¹ All of these estimates are from a 2003 paper published by the American Diabetes Assoc.: Hogan P, Dall T, Nikolov P. Economic Costs of Diabetes in the U.S. in 2002. Diabetes Care, March 2003; 26 (3); 917 – 932.

Ways to reduce the costs of diabetes to your business:



- ▶ Develop an environment that encourages diabetes prevention and early detection (page 26)
- ▶ Support employees with diabetes (page 27)
- ▶ Help employees eat well (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 44)
- ▶ Help employees increase their physical activity (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 46)
- ▶ Support employee weight loss efforts (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 48)
- ▶ Support employee efforts in blood pressure and cholesterol control (see “Heart Disease and Stroke” section, page 29)
- ▶ Create a smoke free workplace and encourage all employees to stop smoking and/or be tobacco free (see the “Tobacco Use” section, page 51)

Develop an environment that encourages diabetes prevention, early detection and good glucose control

- ▶ Promote diabetes prevention and early detection awareness through posters, employee newsletters and/or paycheck inserts.
- ▶ Put links on your intranet to personal diabetes risk assessment opportunities:
 - www.diabetes.org/risk-test.jsp
 - www.diabetes.org/phd/profile/default.jsp
 - familyhistory.hhs.gov/
 - www.genetics.com.au/pdf/pubs/FHTCons.pdf
- ▶ Contact your local hospital’s community outreach program to invite a certified diabetes educator (CDE) or health care provider to talk to a group or provide individual counseling about pre-diabetes, diabetes and diabetes-related risks:
 - Tailor education to your work force (language, literacy, health-related knowledge, appropriate language)
- ▶ Invite a local health educator to talk about family health history trees (local hospitals and public health centers are a good place to start when looking for a health educator).

- ▶ Invite an EMT, nurse or health care provider to a lunch-time talk on the signs and symptoms of diabetes emergencies and how to respond to them appropriately.
- ▶ Offer an on-site blood screening program to identify individuals with diabetes or pre-diabetes. It should:
 - Include employee release time to participate
 - Be available to all employees, dependents and retirees
 - Occur routinely, every 12 months
 - Include follow-up referrals to health care providers for individuals with positive results.
 - Possibly include an incentive to encourage screening participation

Support employees with diabetes

- ▶ Offer on-site resources for people with diabetes:
 - Convenient, private locations where employees can test their blood sugar or administer insulin
 - Immunization clinics
 - Foot clinics
- ▶ Encourage individuals with diabetes to develop tailored plans in case of a medical emergency.
- ▶ Assure the employee health plan covers the following:
 - Diabetes education
 - Nutrition counseling services for people with pre-diabetes and diabetes
 - Annual dilated eye exam
 - Podiatry services
 - Dental care and prophylaxis
 - Contraception and pre-conception counseling for women of childbearing age
 - Blood sugar monitoring equipment and supplies
 - A full range of diabetes medications and diabetes-related supplies

- ▶ Have an emergency plan for medical emergencies
 - Training in emergency plan
 - 9-1-1 contact plan
 - 9-1-1 contact reminders (signs, phone numbers)
 - Have glucagon available

- ▶ Review policies to be sure that workers with diabetes are allowed to store food at their workstation. If food is not allowed in certain workstations, work with employees who have diabetes and are at these stations to achieve a reasonable, safe accommodation.



Resources

- ▶ State of Alaska Diabetes Prevention and Control Program: (907) 269-8035, diabetes@health.state.ak.us
- ▶ The American Diabetes Association: (907 272-1424), www.diabetes.org/home.jsp
- ▶ The National Diabetes Education Program: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep/index.htm
- ▶ Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services
- ▶ Alaska Health Fairs, Inc.
- ▶ Local public health center or community hospital
- ▶ Diabetes information action line: 1 – 800 – DIABETES (342-2827)
- ▶ Joslin Diabetes Center: www.joslin.org/LearnAboutDiabetes_Index_home.asp
- ▶ Handout: www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/diabetes.pdf
- ▶ Brochure: www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/Diabetes_Brochure.pdf
- ▶ Medical cost calculators:
www.diabetesatwork.org/diabetesatwork/gettingstarted/assessmenttool.cfm

Heart disease and stroke

Why should you worry about heart disease and stroke?



- ▶ Heart Disease is the number two killer and stroke is the number four killer in Alaska.
- ▶ Uncontrolled high blood pressure is the primary risk factor for stroke and a major risk factor for heart disease. Because you usually don't feel or "see" high blood pressure it can go untreated if regular screening isn't performed.
 - Of those with high blood pressure almost 70% do not have it controlled.
 - About 90% of the US population will develop high blood pressure in their lifetime.
- ▶ Abnormal cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease. In Alaska, 33% of adult Alaskans have high cholesterol.
 - A 10% decrease in total blood cholesterol levels may reduce the incidence of heart disease by as much as 30%.
 - Only 18% of adults with high blood cholesterol have it under control.

How much do heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and abnormal cholesterol cost your business?



- ▶ Angina pectoris, or chest pain related to heart disease, is the most costly physical health condition to employers in the United States according to a large multi employer study. (Journal of Environmental Medicine, Ron Goetzel, et al, Volume 45, Number 1, January 2003)
- ▶ High blood pressure is the second most costly physical health condition to employers. (Journal of Environmental Medicine, Ron Goetzel, et al, Volume 45, Number 1, January 2003)
- ▶ Blood pressure screening is considered one of the top 10 prevention strategies based on evidence that they protect health and are cost effective. (Partnership for Prevention)
- ▶ Cholesterol screening is considered one of the top 10 prevention strategies based on evidence that they protect health and are cost effective. (Partnership for Prevention)

What contributes to heart disease and stroke?



- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ Abnormal cholesterol levels
- ▶ Tobacco use
- ▶ Poor diet
- ▶ Physical inactivity
- ▶ Overweight or obesity
- ▶ Alcohol

Ways to reduce the costs of heart disease and stroke to your business:



- ▶ Develop an environment that encourages heart disease and stroke prevention and early detection (page 31)
- ▶ Encourage employee awareness of signs and symptoms of a heart attack and stroke and the importance of immediate response (page 31)
- ▶ Develop an environment that encourages high blood pressure prevention and control (page 32)
- ▶ Develop an environment that encourages high cholesterol level prevention and control (page 33)
- ▶ Create a smoke free workplace and encourage all employees to stop smoking and/or be tobacco free (see the “Tobacco Use” section, page 51)
- ▶ Help employees eat well (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 44)
- ▶ Help employees increase their physical activity (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 46)
- ▶ Support employee weight loss efforts (see “Preventing Obesity through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity” section, page 48)

Develop an environment that encourages heart disease and stroke prevention and early detection

- ▶ Introduce a “healthy heart” program, which includes policies for tracking and incentives. Determine how program will be administered and monitored. Consider implementing some or all of those strategies found elsewhere in this notebook for physical inactivity, weight management, nutrition, and tobacco cessation, in conjunction with the blood pressure and cholesterol-specific strategies in the following sections.
- ▶ Provide onsite counseling and risk factor counseling and consider providing:
 - Release time for risk factor counseling
 - One on one counseling resources
- ▶ Review your employee health insurance policy to see if there is:
 - Coverage/co-pay for blood pressure and cholesterol screening
 - Coverage/co-pay for risk factor counseling
 - Coverage/co-pay for medications, including nicotine replacement therapy
 - Coverage/co-pay for disease management for those with high risk

Encourage employee awareness of signs and symptoms of a heart attack and stroke and the importance of immediate response

- ▶ Post the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke in bathroom stalls.
- ▶ Consider inviting an EMT, nurse, or health educator to talk on knowing the signs and symptoms of heart attack or stroke. Locate a presenter through your local hospital’s community outreach program or local fire department.
 - Be sure the risk factor education is tailored to the workforce for literacy level and appropriate language
- ▶ Provide convenient onsite CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and AED (Automated External Defibrillator) training. Check with the local fire department or hospital for instructors or community trainings. Consider providing:
 - For all employees/dependents/retirees
 - Every 2 years according to American Heart Association guidelines
 - Release time for training

- ▶ Schedule a bingo game testing employees' knowledge of signs and symptoms for heart attack to highlight Heart Month (February). Bingo cards are available from the State of Alaska Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention program free of charge call (907) 465-8542. Have a contest to see what employees can correctly identify the signs and symptoms of stroke. Give prizes such as a self monitoring blood pressure cuff or pedometers.
- ▶ Have a staff person certified in CPR onsite at all times.
- ▶ Have a written emergency plan which covers the following topics:
 - Training in emergency plan
 - 9-1-1 contact plan
 - 9-1-1 contact reminders (signs, phone numbers)
 - AED use if there is one located onsite
 - If there is not an AED onsite list the nearest one
- ▶ Have an AED onsite.

Develop an environment that encourages high blood pressure prevention and control

- ▶ Promote blood pressure awareness for one month (May is National Blood Pressure Month).
- ▶ Provide information on where to be checked in town for free, the best home monitoring blood pressure machines, how to reduce your blood pressure, etc. This information is available from the State of Alaska Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program (907) 465-8542 or online at: www.takeheart.alaska.gov.
- ▶ Host employee education on risk reduction by inviting a pharmacist or local health educator to talk on controlling your blood pressure. Locate a presenter through your local hospital's community outreach program or a health educator with a local health care agency. A possible format would be the Lunch and Learn approach of 30-60 minutes group sessions.
- ▶ Provide a seminar on the relationship between high blood pressure and stroke.
 - Be sure the risk factor education is tailored to the workforce for literacy level and appropriate language
- ▶ Promote correct high blood pressure awareness through posters, employee newsletters and/or paycheck inserts. Resources available at: www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/director/health_tips/2005/may/default.htm.

- ▶ Offer onsite blood pressure screening for all employees/dependents/retirees. Local resources who might contract to perform screenings would be nurses from a local hospital, emergency medical personnel, parish nurses, school nurses (during the summer especially) and health educators with health care agencies, such as a WISEWOMAN program. Consider providing:
 - Release time for screening
 - Blood pressure tracking cards available from the State Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program (907) 465-8542 or online at takeheart.alaska.gov
 - Incentives to encourage screening
 - Referrals for follow-up to a high blood pressure reading with health care provider
- ▶ Offer onsite counseling and risk factor counseling and consider providing:
 - Release time for risk factor counseling
 - One-on-one counseling resources such as a WISEWOMAN program
- ▶ Purchase a self monitoring blood pressure machine to be kept in the employee room or some other easily accessed space. Have a poster available that shows the correct way to use the machine.
- ▶ Purchase a medication reference book and start a health promotion lending library.

Develop an environment that encourages high cholesterol level prevention and control

- ▶ Promote cholesterol awareness for one month (September is National Cholesterol Month).
- ▶ Promote cholesterol awareness through posters, employee newsletters and/or paycheck inserts.
- ▶ Host employee education on risk reduction by inviting a dietitian, a nutritionist or local health educator to talk on controlling your cholesterol. Locate a presenter through your local hospital's community out reach program or a health educator with a local health care agency. A possible format would be the Lunch and Learn approach of 30-60 minutes group.
- ▶ Plan events that include screening, promotional materials, education classes for decreasing blood cholesterol.
 - Resources available online at National Cholesterol Education Month Kit hp2010.nhlbihin.net/cholmonth/chol_kit.htm
 - Be sure the risk factor education is tailored to the workforce for literacy level and appropriate language

- ▶ Provide convenient onsite cholesterol screening every 12 months. Local resources who might contract to perform screenings would be Alaska Health Fairs, nurses/lab from a local hospital, emergency medical personnel. Consider providing:
 - Screening for all employees
 - Release time for screening
 - Options between venipuncture (taken from the arm) and fingerstick (taken from the finger tip) methods to attract those that may prefer one method over the other. Fingerstick method gives results within 5 minutes.
 - Cholesterol tracking cards available from the American Heart Association (www.americanheart.org)
 - Incentives to encourage screening
 - Referrals for follow-up to an abnormal cholesterol reading with health care provider
- ▶ Promote referral for those with elevated levels. Check with screening providers to see if there is a release that employees could sign in order to have a copy of results sent to their primary provider (primary providers are the main medical person someone sees for illnesses, etc. They are usually a doctor, an advanced nurse practitioner, or a physician's assistant.)

Resources



- ▶ Heart Attack Signs and Symptoms materials: www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/director/health_tips/2004/feb/default.htm
- ▶ National Heart Lung and Blood Institute: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/index.htm#chol
- ▶ Stroke Signs and symptoms of stroke materials: www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200037
- ▶ National Stroke Association: www.stroke.org/site/PageServer?pagename=HOME
- ▶ 10 Year Risk Calculator: hp2010.nhlbihin.net/atp/iii/calculator.asp?usertype=pub
- ▶ National Institutes of Health Medline Plus: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/cholesterol.html
- ▶ Control Your Blood Pressure...for Life! posters, brochures, newsletter articles, crossword puzzles: www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/director/health_tips/2005/may/default.htm

- ▶ Take Heart Alaska: www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/director/health_tips/2005/may/default.htm
- ▶ American Heart Association: www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200022
- ▶ National Institutes of Health Medline Plus:
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/highbloodpressure.html

Job stress

Why should you worry about stress in the workplace?



- ▶ Stressed workers smoke more, eat less well, have more problems with alcohol and/or drugs, have more family problems, are less motivated on the job, have more trouble with co-workers and have more physical illnesses.
- ▶ Stress costs U.S. businesses between \$200 million and \$300 million per year, according to researcher Ravi Tangri in his book *Stress Costs, Stress Cures*. Also, various studies estimate that between 60% and 90% of all doctor visits are in some way stress-related.

How much does job stress cost your business?



- ▶ To put these costs in more concrete terms for your business, these same studies show that stress is associated with:
 - 19 percent of absenteeism
 - 40 percent of turnover
 - 55 percent of employee assistance programs
 - 30 percent of short- and long-term disability
 - 10 percent of drug plan costs
 - 60 percent of total workplace accidents

What contributes to job stress?



- ▶ Lack or loss of social support networks
- ▶ An overly demanding job
- ▶ A job with responsibility but without sufficient control or authority
- ▶ Major life changes such as divorce or death of a loved one

Ways to reduce the costs of job stress to your business:



- ▶ Develop an environment that supports stress reduction and stress management (page 38)
- ▶ Create a safe and positive work environment (page 39)

Develop an environment that supports stress reduction and stress management

- ▶ Survey employees to determine their perceptions about sources of stress. This information will help you identify the most important areas to target for stress reduction.
- ▶ Display posters in work areas reminding employees to use stress relief and time management techniques.
- ▶ Make stress management brochures available (for example, see www.state.sc.us/dmh/bryan/webstres.htm).
- ▶ Start an honor system lending library with stress management books, videos, and magazines. Employees can bring books in and check them out.
- ▶ Self-help websites for stress management can be found at:
 - stress.about.com/od/generaltechniques/tp/toptionacts.htm
 - www.pql.se/ (publication of Uppsala University in Sweden) (requires free registration)
 - www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_TCS.htm
- ▶ Use your employee newsletter to promote awareness of job stress and how to prevent and control it.
- ▶ Provide lists of counselors in your area.
- ▶ Distribute conflict management, time management, and/or stress management tips daily/weekly/monthly to employees.
- ▶ Provide information about courses on stress management, time management, team building, conflict resolution, relaxation response, parenting skills and/or coping skills courses in your community. Consider sponsoring one or more at your workplace.
- ▶ Help supervisors to understand their role in preventing and managing stress on their team.
- ▶ Train supervisors to look for signs of unhealthy stress in their team members. Information for supervisors can be found at:
 - www.comcare.gov.au/pdf_files/PUB8.pdf (publication of the Australian government)
 - www.pql.se/ (publication of Uppsala University in Sweden)
- ▶ Have a lunch-and-learn or after-work event to teach employees how to monitor their stress levels and how to relieve their stress. Include family members in such an after-work event.

- ▶ Provide a humor corner or bulletin board with humorous cartoons, books, pictures, etc.
- ▶ Sponsor a Stress Management Challenge that helps employees practice stress reducing activities (for an example, see webs.cmich.edu/insidemuadmin/pictures/5-22-2006june-challenge.pdf).

Create a safe and positive work environment

- ▶ Display meeting etiquette and conflict resolution posters in meeting rooms.
- ▶ Encourage employees to take their allotted vacation time.
- ▶ Consider instituting a flex-time and/or telecommuting policy so your employees can better balance home and work responsibilities.
- ▶ Provide an Employee Assistance Program and encourage its use.
- ▶ Review your employee health insurance policy to see if there is coverage for risk factor counseling and medications.
- ▶ Review job descriptions and work processes in areas where stress is highest. Use guidelines from the CDC to guide redesign to reduce stress: (www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/stresswk.html).
 - Ensure that the workload is in line with workers' capabilities and resources
 - Design jobs to provide meaning, stimulation, and opportunities for workers to use their skills
 - Clearly define workers' roles and responsibilities
 - Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs
 - Provide opportunities for social interaction among workers
- ▶ Improve physical working conditions (e.g. ergonomics, appropriate use of technology).
- ▶ Provide career development programs and ensure employees have opportunities to progress within your company.
- ▶ Manage time spent in meetings.
 - Institute meeting-free days or half-days.
 - End meetings on 50 minute boundaries to allow transition time.
- ▶ Establish and support activities organized by employees to encourage social interaction and fun.

- ▶ Institute regular-interval stress relief breaks for employees to refocus. For example, based on an audio signal or computer-generated reminder at designated intervals, they could:
 - Take a short walk around the building
 - Do in-chair isometrics
 - Do deep breathing at their desk
 - Stretch
- ▶ Sponsor team-building events/courses for work groups.
- ▶ Arrange to periodically bring in a chair-masseuse as a treat for desk-bound employees.
- ▶ Provide full spectrum lighting during winter months to help with Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Resources



- ▶ Centers for Disease Control, Stress at Work: www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/stresswk.html
- ▶ Job Stress Network: www.workhealth.org/prevention/prred.html
- ▶ Guidance on Occupational Stress: www.qub.ac.uk/so/webpages/downloads/gn-stress.doc
- ▶ Health A to Z: www.healthatoz.com/healthatoz/Atoz/dc/caz/ment/strs/strs_gen_risk.jsp

Mental health, alcohol and drug abuse issues

Why should I worry about mental health, alcohol and drug abuse issues?



- ▶ Behavioral health issues can be significant concerns for employers, impacting the quality of life of your employees, and the ability for your business to be successful. These issues, however, can be very complex. Employers wishing to address behavioral health issues should contact their nearest mental health and/or drug and alcohol treatment program for specialized consultation and assistance in developing a worksite program.

Resources



- ▶ Governor's Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse: www.hss.state.ak.us/abada/
- ▶ Alaska Mental Health Board: hss.state.ak.us/amhb/
- ▶ Alaska Division of Behavioral Health: www.hss.state.ak.us/dbh/
- ▶ Regional Provider Listing: www.hss.state.ak.us/dbh/resources/regioin_workgroups.htm

Preventing obesity through healthy eating and physical activity

Why should you worry about obesity?



- ▶ Nearly 2/3 (63%) of Alaskan adults are overweight or obese.
- ▶ Obesity causes expensive, lifelong health conditions such as:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Certain cancers
 - Bone and joint problems

How much does obesity cost your business?



- ▶ Obesity costs Alaska \$195 million per year in direct medical expenses alone.
- ▶ Obesity leads to increased costs for you, in the form of:
 - Increased health care costs
 - Increased absenteeism
 - Decreased productivity on the job
 - Higher insurance and workers' compensation premiums
 - Greater risks of occupational injuries
 - Earlier retirement due to ill health

What contributes to obesity?



- ▶ Physical inactivity
- ▶ Poor diet

Ways to reduce the costs of obesity to your business:



- ▶ Help employees eat well
 - Create an environment that supports healthy eating (page 44)

- Provide opportunities for employees to practice healthy eating behaviors (page 45)
- Provide employees with healthy eating information and resources (page 45)
- ▶ Help employees increase their physical activity
 - Create an environment that supports physical activity (page 46)
 - Provide opportunities for employees to be physically active (page 46)
 - Provide employees with physical activity information and resources (page 47)
- ▶ Support employee weight loss efforts
 - Create an environment that supports weight management (page 48)
 - Provide opportunities for employee weight management (page 48)
 - Provide employees with information and weight management resources (page 49)

Help employees eat well

Create an environment that supports healthy eating:

- ▶ Provide refrigerators and microwaves so that employees can bring healthy meals from home.
- ▶ Install water coolers in easily accessible places.
- ▶ Adopt a policy to provide only healthy foods at meetings and trainings. Provide whole grain foods, fruits, vegetables, and low fat dairy products. Check out American Cancer Society's Meeting Well Campaign www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_1_5X_Meeting_Well.asp.
- ▶ Serve healthy foods and beverages in the cafeteria and vending machines (e.g. nutrient rich and low calorie).
- ▶ Install refrigerated vending machine with healthy food choices.
- ▶ Provide nutritional labeling for cafeteria foods.
- ▶ In the employee cafeteria or vending machines, make it policy to price healthy food options lower and fund the subsidy with a premium on high fat foods such as French fries or chips.
- ▶ Encourage management to model healthy lifestyle and eating behaviors.
- ▶ Include dedication to healthy eating in the company mission statement.
- ▶ Enroll in food cooperatives as a company. Place orders for staff and allow food pick up on site at work.

Provide opportunities for employees to practice healthy eating behaviors:

- ▶ Feature a healthy-meal-of-the-day with calorie/fat/fiber counts in the cafeteria every day.
- ▶ Sponsor a bring-a-healthy-dish potluck lunch where employees can exchange recipes.
- ▶ Set up an honor system payment for fruit and other healthy snacks. A good example is www.healthymainepartnerships.org/pdfs/Good_Work/Fruit-Veggie_Honor_System.pdf.
- ▶ Hold a Five a Day challenge to promote fruit and vegetable intake. Employees would keep track of the numbers of fruits and vegetables eaten for a period of time. Those meeting the goal of at least 5 A Day would earn a bag/ box of fruit or vegetables.
- ▶ Invite a guest chef to do a cooking demonstration at work and share healthy recipes.
- ▶ Arrange for a dietitian or other health educator to be onsite for individual counseling.
- ▶ Invite a local dietitian to give a seminar – find one through www.eatrightalaska.org/find_dietitian.html or the UAA Dietetic Internship program.
- ▶ Sponsor healthy-recipe contests in your employee newsletter.

Provide employees with healthy eating information and resources:

- ▶ Send weekly e-mail messages with short informative nutrition facts.
- ▶ Put links to nutrition resources on your intranet site:
 - www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines
 - www.mypyramid.gov
 - www.5aday.gov,
 - Nutrition Facts & Calorie Counter: www.nutritiondata.com/index.html
 - How to use Fruits and Vegetables to Manage your Weight: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/CDC_5-A-Day.pdf
 - Interactive menu planner: hp2010.nhlbihin.net/menuplanner/menu.cgi
- ▶ Provide nutrition information at company health fairs.
- ▶ Include information or quizzes about nutrition each month in employee newsletter.

Help your employees increase their physical activity

Create an environment that supports physical activity:

- ▶ Encourage management to model physical activity.
- ▶ Include dedication to physical activity in the company mission statement.
- ▶ Install an exercise room for use before and after work, or, if practical, over the lunch hour.
- ▶ Provide additional vacation time for employees who maintain a certain physical activity level.
- ▶ Pay entry fees for physical activity events that employees participate in.
- ▶ Pay a portion of insurance premiums for employees who maintain a certain physical activity level.
- ▶ Subsidize gym memberships, personal training sessions, or exercise classes.

Provide opportunities for employees to be physically active:

- ▶ Encourage employees to walk or bike to work by:
 - Offering flextime schedules so that employees can walk/ bike to work
 - Setting aside space for lockers to hold exercise gear and/or a shower
 - Installing bicycle racks and monitoring them for security
 - Providing trail or bike route maps to employees
 - For a listing of trails in Alaska:
www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/director/health_tips/2004/june/links.htm
 - Distributing bicycle safety information and/or helmets
 - Promoting national bike to work week or day
 - Negotiating a discount with local businesses for employee bicycle purchases
 - Improving the attractiveness and safety of your outdoor sidewalks
- ▶ Encourage employees to use breaks and part of lunch to be physically active.
- ▶ Promote employee use of stairs by:
 - Ensuring that stairwells are clean, safe, and attractive
 - See the CDC StairWELL to better health website for additional ideas on how to improve your stairwells: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/stairwell/index.htm

- Posting signs by elevators and building entrances that direct employees to the stairs
 - Conducting stair-climbing challenges or programs that track stair use (climb Denali, etc.)
- ▶ Invite a local sports figure or a personal trainer to give a seminar. Your local health clubs or schools may have contacts.
 - ▶ Sponsor physical activity challenges or programs (stair-climbing challenges, walking programs, etc.). Examples of pre-packaged physical activity programs include:
 - 10,000 step programs, for example:
www.diabetesincontrol.com/programs/steps/getstarted.shtml
 or www.shapeup.org/10000steps.html
 - ▶ Provide free pedometers to go with walking programs.
 - ▶ Offer classes on how-to-prepare for sports or physical activity events.
 - ▶ Sponsor a team at a local charity run, bike, ski, or walk. You may want to encourage family participation.
 - ▶ Create an employee sports team (hockey, softball, etc.).
 - ▶ Form walking or skiing clubs, perhaps with contests between departments.
 - ▶ Encourage winter activity by placing a display featuring cold-weather exercise apparel at building entrances.

Provide employees with physical activity information and resources:

- ▶ Provide a list of local personal trainers to your employees. Contact your local health club or consult the Yellow Pages.
- ▶ Make brochures describing the benefits of physical activity and how to get started available to employees.
 - One example from the American Heart Association is available at:
www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=9036
- ▶ Use your employee newsletter to promote physical activity-oriented special events and educational programs. Also use it to distribute facts and tips about exercise, and to celebrate successes.
- ▶ Make brochures describing the benefits of physical activity and how to get started available to employees.
- ▶ Use bulletin boards and/or e-boards to announce and track special events and challenges.

- ▶ Provide links to credible on-line physical activity programs. Examples include:
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “Exercise for Everyone” program at: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm
 - The American Heart Association’s twelve-week online physical activity program for women at: www.s2mw.com/choosetomove/
 - The President’s Challenge on Physical Fitness at: www.presidentschallenge.org/

Support Employee Weight Loss Efforts

Create and environment that supports weight management:

- ▶ Provide coverage or co-pay incentive for enrollment and participation in weight loss programs.
- ▶ Provide access to private, commercial-quality scales for weigh-ins.

Provide opportunities for employee weight management:

- ▶ Encourage employees who want to lose weight to attend classes and provide them with a local resource list.
 - Commercial weight loss organizations such as Weight Watchers or Take of Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) offer community-based meetings and, in some cases, will bring a weekly meeting onsite at your location. Some commercial weight loss programs also have a specific program for worksites.
 - Check with local hospitals and health clubs that may offer classes.
- ▶ Provide employees resource list of computer weight-loss programs, for example:
 - The Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s 12-week self-directed worksite program for diet and exercise: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/pep.htm
 - Free internet-based weight loss tracking programs such as (www.mypyramidtracker.gov)
 - Tracking programs for hand-held computers, for example Diet & Exercise Tracker for Palm Pilots or Diet Organizer for Blackberry.
- ▶ Sponsor a weight-loss challenge (group challenge or individual), and make a company donation for each pound lost to a local charity.

Provide employees with information and weight management resources:

- ▶ Supply employees with informative materials such as:
 - 5-A-Day website for fruits and vegetables:
www.5aday.gov/tools/assets/pdf/what9looks_like.pdf.
 - USDA food pyramid recommendations: www.mypyramid.gov/global_nav/order.html
 - “HealthierUS” initiative about dietary guidelines: healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/
 - National Institute of Health: hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/

Resources



- ▶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity:
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa
- ▶ State of Alaska Obesity Prevention and Control Program:
www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/obesity

Tobacco use

Why should you worry about tobacco use in your workplace?



- ▶ Tobacco is the #1 cause of preventable death in Alaska.
- ▶ Whether or not you choose to address tobacco use in your workplace, you pay for it. Tobacco use results in:
 - Increased health care costs (about half of tobacco's financial burden to business)
 - Increased absenteeism
 - Decreased productivity on the job
 - Higher life insurance premiums
 - Greater risks of occupational injuries
 - Earlier retirement due to ill health
 - Higher maintenance and cleaning costs
 - Higher risk of fire damage and other accidents related to smoking
 - Higher fire insurance premiums
 - Costlier disability

How much does tobacco cost your business?



- ▶ Each year, tobacco use will cost you \$3500 per tobacco user. If you do not know how many users are in your workplace, use the Alaskan average smoking rate of 24.7%. This would be \$86,450 per 100 employees each year.

Effective ways to reduce the costs of tobacco use to your business:



- ▶ Create a smoke free workplace (page 52)
- ▶ Help your employees who use tobacco to quit (page 53)
- ▶ Include tobacco dependence treatment in employee health benefits (page 54)

Create a smokefree workplace

Create a smoke free workplace, including a written policy and procedures to enforce the policy. A smoke free workplace will reduce your employees' exposure to secondhand smoke and also provide a helpful environment to your employees who are trying to quit tobacco. Most smokers and almost all nonsmokers support clean indoor air policies.

- ▶ Contact local tobacco prevention alliance or State of Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program for assistance.
- ▶ Announce your company's commitment to a smoke free workplace.
- ▶ Assign responsibility and authority for implementation to a member of senior management.
- ▶ Create a task force to plan implementation. The task force should represent all segments of the organization, tobacco users, non tobacco users, representatives of any official employee organizations.
- ▶ Develop a timetable.
- ▶ Gather information.
 - Medical, legal, economic, social effects of tobacco use.
 - Smoke free policies implemented by other organizations.
 - Facilities information (for example, leases with other organizations that may influence policy decisions)
 - Employee information (percentage of tobacco users, level of support for Smoke free policies)
 - Existing company policy on tobacco use.
 - Legal issues (legislation, regulations, union contracts)
- ▶ Phase in the Smoke free workplace. Have appropriate stakeholder groups review the action.
- ▶ Announce the policy and implementation plan to all employees.
- ▶ Inform and educate employees about the policy and implementation plan.
- ▶ Make changes to help the phase-in.
 - Install “no smoking” or “Smoke free workplace” signs.
 - Remove ashtrays and other cigarette receptacles.
 - Remove cigarette vending machines.

- ▶ Offer and/or advertise tobacco cessation programs to employees and their families.
 - Ask non-tobacco employees to support and encourage smokers in a positive way (avoid harassment or nagging)

Help employees quit tobacco

- ▶ Include tobacco dependence treatment in employee health benefits. (see below also)
 - Calculate the return on investment to your business
www.businesscaseroi.org/roi/default.aspx.
 - Require that employees pay no more than the standard co-pay. Research shows that tobacco users rarely use cessation services inappropriately and are much more likely to quit when no co-payment is required.
- ▶ Allow employees to participate in onsite, community, internet or telephone based tobacco cessation counseling during work hours.
- ▶ Refer tobacco users to cessation programs
 - Alaska Tobacco Quitline (free service) 1.888.842.QUIT (7848)
 - Local tobacco cessation programs.
 - Web-based cessation resources (see below).
 - Individual or group counseling through an onsite program.
- ▶ Promote tobacco cessation and tobacco cessation resources through newsletters, email, events, etc.

Cover tobacco dependence treatment in employee health benefits

- ▶ Calculate the return on investment to your business www.businesscaseroi.org/roi/default.aspx.
- ▶ Ask your health plan representative about tobacco cessation programs if you answer “no” to any of the questions below:

How does your health plan help people who want to quit smoking?

1. Does your health plan help people who want to quit smoking? Yes No
How _____
2. Does your health plan include smoking cessation therapy as a covered (paid) benefit for all members? Yes No

Medication Benefit

3. What smoking cessation drugs are covered? List them:

4. Are over the counter medications, such as nicotine patches and gum covered? Yes No
What is the co pay amount? _____

Counseling Benefit (Note: the most successful programs offer both medication and counseling.)

5. What counseling (in-person, online, telephone) does your health plan cover, how often is counseling covered each year and for what period of time (e.g., twice/year for 90 days)? List the counseling benefit:

6. Is the behavioral intervention intensive enough to be effective, including:
 - a. At least four to seven sessions? Yes No
 - b. At least 20- to 30-minute sessions? Yes No
 - c. At least two to eight weeks in duration? Yes No
7. Does the behavioral intervention include information on:
 - a. Problem solving/skills training? Yes No
 - b. Social support? Yes No
 - c. Relapse prevention? Yes No
8. Does your health plan evaluate the financial impact of smoking and its impact on your healthcare dollars? Yes No

Resources

Employer Toolkits



- ▶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Making Your Workplace Smoke free - A Decision Maker's Guide:
www.cdc.gov/TOBACCO/research_data/environmental/etsguide.htm
- ▶ American Lung Association: www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=22542
- ▶ American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/PED_10_5.asp?sitearea=PED
- ▶ Americans for Nonsmokers Rights: www.no-smoke.org/goingsmokefree.php?id=103
- ▶ Tobacco Cessation Leadership Network: www.tcln.org/cessation/employers.html
- ▶ Employers' Smoking Cessation Guide: Practical Approaches To A Costly Workplace Problem: www.welcoa.org/freeresources/pdf/employersguide_2nd_edition.pdf

Communicating with employees

- ▶ Materials are available through your local tobacco prevention and control coordinator, the State of Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (907.269.3498), or through the following websites:
 - www.no-smoke.org/goingsmokefree.php?id=103
 - www.cdc.gov/tobacco/
 - www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=22542
 - www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/PED_10_5.asp?sitearea=PED

Web-based assistance for employees trying to quit tobacco

- ▶ American Cancer Society: Tobacco and Cancer
www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/ped_10.asp
This web page, part of www.cancer.org, provides tips for quitting smoking and explains the Great American Smokeout. You'll also find information on the effects of tobacco use and current laws about smoking.
- ▶ American Lung Association: Tobacco Control: www.lungusa.org/tobacco/
The Tobacco Control section of www.lungusa.org offers general information about quitting smoking, smoking and tobacco control as well as specific information for women and teens. Visitors can easily link to the State Legislated Actions on Tobacco Initiatives report which provides data on youth access laws, smoke free workplaces, cigarette taxes, and state spending on tobacco control programs.

- ▶ ChewFree.com: www.chewfree.com
A research study funded by the National Cancer Institute and led by the Oregon Research Institute offering assistance to smokeless tobacco users. Participants receive quitting assistance and are asked to complete research questionnaires on-line to help evaluate the program.
- ▶ Great Start: www.americanlegacy.org/greatstart/html/home.html
A free program for pregnant smokers who want to quit sponsored by the American Legacy Foundation.
- ▶ QuitNet: quitnet.com
A web-based cessation program operated in association with Boston University's School of Public Health.
- ▶ SmokeClinic: www.smokeclinic.com
An online initiative offering smokers assistance with quitting.
- ▶ Smokefree.gov: www.smokefree.gov
Online resource with tools, information, and support that have been effective in helping smokers quit, including state and national resources, free materials, and the best quitting advice the National Cancer Institute and its partners have to offer.
- ▶ Try to Stop: www.trytostop.org
A resource for smokers interested in quitting sponsored by the Massachusetts department of health.

Appendices

The purpose of these appendices is to offer a big picture view on health promotion programs. In this manual, each sub-section on a specific disease, condition or behavior includes recommendations that will build awareness, increase knowledge, support behavior change and provide an environment that reinforces healthy behaviors. You can use these appendices to make sure that your choices from all of these recommendations combine into a sound health promotion project, or to design your own project.

One of the major theories on how people change suggests that people move through six phases along the way to developing a new habit. These are:

- ▶ Precontemplation – no plan to change behavior, ever
- ▶ Contemplation – plans to change behavior some time during the next six months
- ▶ Preparation – plans to change behavior in the next 30 days, and is taking baby steps in that direction
- ▶ Action – adopted a new behavior during the past six months
- ▶ Maintenance – has used the new behavior for at least six months and relapse is possible
- ▶ Termination – new behavior is securely in place; will not revert to previous behavior. Relapse is not a concern.

While it is up to an individual to make the desired change, successful health promotion programs can increase the likelihood of success by helping people move through the steps of change. They:

- ▶ Boost awareness of the need for adopting a new, healthy behavior (for people in the precontemplation and contemplation stages)
- ▶ Increase knowledge about this healthy behavior (for people in the contemplation, preparation and action stages)
- ▶ Offer incentives and other reinforcements to encourage the healthy behavior (for people in the preparation, action and maintenance stages), and
- ▶ Create an environment where the healthy behavior is at least as easy to select as another less healthy one (for people in the preparation, action, maintenance and termination stages).

Since any group of individuals will include people at each of the stages, successful programs coordinate their activities to operate at more than one level. If you pick and chose ideas from each of the tables in Appendix I, you will build a sound health promotion program. Appendix II is designed to help you put your ideas together, and make sure you haven't missed anyone.

Appendix I: Awareness, knowledge, behavior and environmental activities

Awareness Activities: Many employees do not know that they need to change their behavior in order to improve their health. Awareness strategies are designed to support workers as they learn what they might do, and think about starting to do it.

Activity	Examples
Posters	Promote importance of bike helmets through posters on bulletin boards
Brochures	Place brochures of the most common everyday illnesses (such as colds, flu, fevers, and back pain) in brochure racks in high-traffic areas
Displays	Encourage winter activity by placing a display featuring cold-weather exercise apparel at building entrances
Newsletters	Employee health newsletters on a variety of topics; also often reaches the family
Bulletin boards and e-boards	Promote low-fat fast-food options by having a quiz on low-fat versus high-fat choices
E-mail messages	Encourage breast health awareness through an e-mail postcard to all women over age 50 during breast health month
Web page	Seasonal or monthly awareness messages can be placed on the health promotion program home page. Links can also be made to other service agencies with similar message
Special events	A group walk on National Employee Health and Fitness Day to increase awareness of physical activity, Health Fairs

Knowledge Activities: Employees who know that they should change their behavior are interested in learning more about specific health topics. Knowledge strategies help workers decide how and when they will change a behavior. Variety is key; employees will not be ready to change the same behavior at the same time. Also, employees have differing learning styles. Effective health promotion programs use a variety of techniques to be sure that education is offered in at least one format that works well for nearly everyone.

Activity	Description
Seminars	A group learning experience, usually involving a leader and offering extensive question and answer time. The seminar is usually a one-time, 2- to 4-hour meeting, and may be for a large group
Classes	Multiple-session classes extend the chance to offer ongoing conversation and support beyond what can happen in a seminar. The size of the group and length of each meeting may vary.
Computer-based	Intranet- or internet-based and CD-ROM-based programs
Self-help materials	A number of vendors offer programs on a variety of health -risk topics. They usually combine written materials with audiotapes

Behavior Activities: Behavior change is hard. People are more successful with long term change if they have a chance to practice the new behavior. There are multiple ways to provide those opportunities. Again, variety is the key.

Activity	Description
Challenges	Employee challenges can be offered around many different behaviors. For example, walking challenges can help people get more exercise, a nutrition challenge can help people eat more fruits and vegetables. These types of programs usually run over 4-12 weeks, and provide a way for people to track their behavior. <i>The Take Heart Resource Guide</i> has many examples of challenges.
Classes	Classes that allow for active participation can be effective in changing behavior. Healthy cooking classes or back safety classes where employees go through the exercises to strengthen their backs and lift properly are examples.
Phone-based	Call-in services, generally staffed by trained nurses, are available on a variety of health issues. One such example is the statewide Tobacco Quit Line, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for people interested in quitting their tobacco use. These services can provide ongoing support and guidance for behavior change.
Referral to off-site services	Referrals can be made to a wide range of local services, including tobacco cessation programs, mental health counseling, 12 step programs, substance abuse and alcohol services, physical therapist, etc.
Individual consultation	Health professionals such as dietitians, exercise physiologists, or health educators meet periodically with employees on an individual basis to provide support and guidance for change.

Environmental Activities: Employees that are ready to change will be more successful if specific services and opportunities are available to support the new behavior. These strategies are aimed at producing long-term and sustainable changes by employees, and can be the most effective way to assist larger numbers of people in changing their health risk behaviors if it is done in a supportive way that includes the other two types of strategies.

Activity	Examples
Onsite services	Healthy foods available at worksite, physical activity areas, providing physical activity space on-site, immunization clinics
Policy change	Worksite policies on food service, smoke free environments, flextime scheduling
Sponsorship to off-site services	Subsidized gym memberships, tobacco cessation counseling and nicotine replacement services
Specialized equipment	Ergonomic assessment implementation, protective gear
Disease management	Referral with disease management counselor, formal education, development of disease management plan
Employee assistance programs	Mental health/counseling services for such things as substance/ alcohol abuse, marital or family issues, financial problems; legal counsel
Adequate health care coverage	Ensuring health care coverage is available for the services, conditions, and treatments that are prioritized by the business and the employees.

Appendix II: Worksite health promotion planning form

	Identified Health Issues		
Strategies – Select at least one from each level.	1.	2.	3.
Awareness Strategies			
Posters			
Brochures			
Displays			
Newsletters			
Bulletin Boards			
E-mail messages			
Web page			
Special events			
Educational Strategies			
Seminars			
Classes			
Computer-based			
Self-help materials			
Behavioral Strategies			
Challenges			
Classes			
Phone-based			
Individual consultation			
Referrals to off-site services			
Environmental Strategies			
Onsite services			
Policy change			
Specialized equipment			
Disease Management			
Employee assistance program			
Health insurance coverage			

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