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Worksite Nutrition Impacts the Bottom Line

There really is no debate that health care costs are affecting the bottom line for businesses and the nation as a whole. Most working Americans eat at least one meal or snack at work every day. Many times this food comes from catered meetings, vending machines, candy dishes or other sources that are supplied by the company or organization. Diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and overweight or obesity issues are often cost leaders for any employee insurance program. Costs associated with being overweight or obese can be as much as \$2,485¹ per employee, per year. These costs represent direct medical costs, lost productivity, and absenteeism. All of these health issues are related to nutrition, underscoring the importance of improving the workplace food environment.



Nutrition environment components to consider in a workplace are cafeteria, vending, food served at meetings and events, access to fruits and vegetables and foods brought in by employees and left in common areas such as break rooms. There are many ways to approach the nutrition environment in a worksite including the following recommendations from successful programs:

- Invite employees to be involved in the process of evaluating the current environment and recommending changes.
- Consider adopting criteria for foods that are sold on company grounds such as limits on the percentage of fat in vending or cafeteria items.
- Establish a “no-dumping ground” in employee break areas to limit the quantity of unhealthy items that are brought into work.
- Recognize that employees may have strong feelings about sharing their favorite foods and recipes.
- Limit the number of sugared beverages sold in vending machines and reserve an equal number of vending slots for healthier beverages such as skim or low-fat milk, 100% juices and bottled water.

Worksite Nutrition Impacts the Bottom Line - (cont'd)

- Establish a cost differential for healthy foods sold in the cafeteria or vending machines so that unhealthy items cost slightly more than healthy items.
- Identify healthy vending options with a wellness sticker.
- Promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria and at meetings or events.
- Make kitchen equipment available for employee food preparation and storage.
- Organize a worksite farmer's market or produce delivery system.
- Provide incentives for participation in nutrition and/or weight management activities.
- Adopt a company healthy food policy addressing food at meetings, break areas, potlucks, candy dishes etc.

By providing nutritious options at work, worksites can support employees in making healthy choices each and every day. Making these changes may not be easy or instantaneous but they are worth the effort. The workplace is an ideal setting to influence healthier food choices through worksite nutrition policies and practices that provide healthier options, leading by example, working with vendors and more. For more information about nutritional criteria, assessment tools and sample policies click on the following links:

http://www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc_content/Colleges/SPH/sph_news/Nutrition.pdf

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/WorksiteFitBusinessKit.aspx>

<http://www.eatwellworkwell.org>

¹American Journal of Health Promotion, September/October, 2005

National Nutrition Month® 2011

The theme for March 2011 is “Eat Right with Color.” An emphasis on eating a variety of fruits and vegetables and including a variety of colors will ensure that many nutrients are present in those foods. National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the American Dietetic Association.

Promotion Ideas for Workplaces:

- Organize a “healthy recipe” contest among employees. Have the judges be VIPs from your workplace. Award nutrition month t-shirts, mugs or other items as prizes.
- Distribute coupons for discounts on a healthy meal featured in your cafeteria.
- Decorate the cafeteria with nutrition month materials and give out nutrition fact sheets, brochures and bookmarks.



Promotional items for National Nutrition Month® will become available in early 2011. For more information go to: <http://www.eatright.org/NNM/content.aspx?id=7832>.

2010 Minnesota Student Survey Data Available

State, county and district results of the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) were released this past fall. The survey is administered every three years to 6th, 9th, and 12th grade students in the regular public elementary and secondary schools, charter schools, and tribal schools. It is also offered to students from all grade levels in alternative learning centers and to youth in juvenile correctional facilities. In 2010 there were 6,551 students in Washington County who took the survey from the following districts: Forest Lake, Mahtomedi, South Washington County and Stillwater. District 622 data is included in the Ramsey County results.

The survey asks students questions about their activities, opinions, behaviors and experiences. It includes questions on an array of issues - substance abuse (tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs), school climate, violence and safety concerns, healthy eating, out-of-school activities, connections with school and family, and many other topics. At the senior high level, questions are

also asked about gambling, drinking and driving, and sexual activity.

The survey results are used by many organizations for both planning and evaluation and for monitoring trends in health and risk behaviors. The data also helps in the design of programming to meet the current and anticipated needs of youth and assist schools and communities in efficient planning and implementation of education programs. School district leaders and educators, local public health agencies, community coalitions, and community and social services agencies use the results in planning and evaluation for school and community initiatives and prevention programming.

A booklet on the county wide results will be available in January. For more information call Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment at 651-430-6655.

MSS State and County Tables can be found at: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/mss/>.

SAVE THE DATE

How Washington County Youth See Their World---2010 Minnesota Student Survey Trends

Learn about current trends in youth health as well as recommendations for action. Free presentation by Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment.

January 25, 2011, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Washington County Government Center
Lower Level Room 21
14949 62nd Street North
Stillwater, MN 55082

February 2, 2011, 8:00-9:30 a.m.

Forest Lake Service Center
19955 Forest Road North
Forest Lake, MN 55073

February 8, 2011 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Central Park, Valley Creek Room A
8301 Valley Creek Road
Woodbury, MN 55125

Please RSVP to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MSS2010RSVP>.

Presentation brought to you by Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment and the Chemical Health Action Collaborative in Washington County.



SHIP is Full Steam Ahead in Washington County

As 2010 winds down, Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) staff and community partners are busier than ever working on the seven interventions for Washington County: Community Nutrition, Child Care Nutrition, Breastfeeding Support, Health Care Resource and Referral, Worksite Health, School Nutrition, and Community Physical Activity. SHIP partners include the Land Stewardship Project; Lakeview, Woodwinds, and Fairview Hospitals; six local school districts; child care, communications, evaluation and health care consultants; and multiple community members.

Progress to date:

Community Nutrition: Committees made up of community members and lead by the Land Stewardship Project are meeting to plan and implement this intervention targeting access to nutritious foods for all, with emphasis on fruits and vegetables. Preliminary ideas include starting more community gardens, planting fruit trees on public land, working with the food shelves to offer more fresh produce, and recruiting businesses as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) drop off sites. If you are interested in joining a group in your area, contact Ann DeLaVergne at annd@landstewardshipproject.org.



Child Care Nutrition: A consultant was hired to work with child care centers and homes to support policy development, menu revisions, and food practices to increase the fruit and vegetable intake of 2-5 year olds using the LANA program (Learning About Nutrition through Activities curriculum). A second LANA training will be offered in 2011.

Health Care Resource and Referral: SHIP has hired a consultant team to work with the Woodbury Health and Wellness Collaborative and local medical providers to establish a referral system for nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco cessation resources in Washington County. The team is also connecting with other Minnesota counties to explore a statewide database for these referrals.

Worksite Health: Applications for worksite wellness projects that address employee health were distributed in November, and eight worksites will receive funding. These projects run through June 2011 and include employee health assessments, wellness program development, and policy changes to support tobacco cessation and healthy nutrition and physical activity environments in the workplace.

Community Physical Activity: Several things are currently happening around this intervention; community physical activity partner project applications were distributed and nine cities will be funded. Projects include trail maps and markers, bike racks, policy development, and promotion of physical activity resources. Three school districts are also working on physical activity to connect students and other residents to school facilities within the district. Goals include assessing walking and biking trails in the district, forming a plan to connect them to the schools, and reevaluating open hours to allow residents to use facilities that remain empty after school.

SHIP is Full Steam Ahead in Washington County - (cont'd)

School Nutrition: Six local school districts in Washington County are involved with SHIP by reviewing policies, breakfast and lunch menus, conducting assessments of nutrition practices, and looking at ways to improve student and staff nutrition. There is an exciting push to put healthier foods into vending machines and classrooms covering snacks and parties.

Breastfeeding Support: The countywide breastfeeding coalition is on its way with a goal to support local hospitals with staff training and resources. More trained staff means hospitals are better able to offer breastfeeding moms the help they need to continue giving their baby the very best first food. On April 4, 2011, the coalition will be sponsoring a breastfeeding training for nurses and other health care professional working with new moms at The Grand in Stillwater. For more information contact Sheila Humphrey at shumphr2@fairview.org or 651-982-7864.

Communications: "Living Healthy in Washington County" messages will soon be seen by many more residents as the county SHIP media materials and webpage are launched. This is exciting news that will enhance the interventions and bring greater exposure to the initiative.

Family Fitness Fest

Kids in Motion – Stay in Motion!



Monday, February 7, 2011 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
East Ridge High School - Activity Center Entrance

The first ever Family Fitness Fest in South Washington County puts this message into action. All residents are invited to attend and participate in this fun, and energy-charged event to be held on Monday, February 7 at East Ridge High School in Woodbury from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Keynote speaker Carrie Tollefson, 2004 Olympian runner, 2012 hopeful and Minnesota native, will inspire the audience to make healthy choices and to be active every day. Students in K-12 will demonstrate what's cool and new in their Physical Education classes and action-based learning labs. This is NOT the physical education that adults may remember! Zumba, Nia, healthy cooking and other fitness opportunities will also be showcased. Participants can be active or observe. There will be prizes, healthy snacks and lots of action. The beginning of the year is the perfect time to join other community members in a unified pledge toward healthier kids, families and communities.

Event organizers include South Washington County Schools and the Woodbury Health and Wellness Collaborative members including the City of Woodbury, Woodwinds Health Campus, Southeast Area YMCA, Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment, and Kowalski's Market. This event was made possible through funding from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) of the Minnesota Department of Health, the U.S. Department of Education Physical Education Program (PEP) and community donations.



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**NOTE FROM THE
EDITOR:**

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If you have any questions
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PHE@co.washington.mn.us

Include "Healthwave" in the
subject line.

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Mental Wellness Initiative and Woodbury Strategic Planning Results

Mental Wellness Initiative in Washington County Update

Twenty-one people participated in strategic planning for the Mental Wellness Initiative (MWI) over two sessions in October and November. Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment staff facilitated the sessions, which addressed the following questions: "What do we want to see in place as a result of our actions in 3-5 years?", "What is blocking us from moving toward our vision?", "What should be the strategic directions?" and finally "What do we need to accomplish in 2011?"

The consensus on the final strategic directions for the MWI focus on mental health issues are:

- build upon and increase partnerships;
- create targeted communication and education; and
- strengthen school and community relationships.

MWI will focus on the new action plan for 2011 at upcoming meetings.

The "New" Woodbury Suicide Prevention Collaborative

Twelve people from the Woodbury area also participated in strategic planning for the new Woodbury Suicide Prevention Collaborative (WSPC). Department staff facilitated the strategic planning sessions as well. This new group is collaborating with South Washington County Teen Health Fund. Similar to the Mental Wellness Initiative, this collaborative addressed the same questions as above and agreed on strategic directions for the next 3 years.

The final strategic directions for the WSPC are:

- Establish an integrated community wide suicide prevention coalition.
- Initiate sustainable community wide education for suicide prevention.

WSPC is planning to host a community forum on March 3, 2011 with a speaker on suicide prevention and share their strategic plan with the community. They plan to use the community forum to enlist more partners to support the new strategic directions.

Department staff continue to support these community based efforts through technical assistance and local public health grant funds to five community Teen Health Fund groups.

For more information, click on [Mental Wellness Initiative](#) on the Department website or call 651-430-6655.

For more information about the Woodbury Suicide Prevention Collaborative contact: Renee Penticoff rpenticoff@comcast.net or Sarah Fuerst sarah.fuerst@ysb.net