

Georgia's Worksite Wellness Initiative

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What is the CVHI's Worksite Wellness Initiative (WWI)?

Strategy:

The Worksite Wellness Initiative (WWI) targets people at risk for cardiovascular disease via the worksite, considering that American adults on average spend 50% of their waking hours working.

Goal:

The WWI is designed to encourage worksites to adopt and implement model wellness policies. These model policies, which are buttressed by appropriate environmental changes and wellness programs, help employees to control their blood pressure and cholesterol and to reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease.

How it Works:

The WWI partners with worksites in regions that have a high CVD burden. These worksites are provided with a worksite wellness toolkit, training, and ongoing technical assistance from the state coordinator and the district health promotion coordinators. Worksites also join a regional network of worksites for peer-to-peer support.

It is recommended that each worksite establish a wellness committee that will assess the health needs of employees, develop a wellness strategy, and coordinate it.

The worksites proceed to adopt and implement model wellness policies that address CVD risk factors (tobacco use, nutrition, or physical activity) and/or emergency response to stroke and heart attack. Additional environmental change (e.g. signage or physical activity facilities) and/or health programs (e.g. fitness classes or chronic disease self-management) are pursued in order to create a heart healthy work environment.

Whenever possible, the WWI is to identify and partner with major employer groups such as county chambers and city governments. This approach accomplishes a number of things: (a) a wider population reach, (b) buy-in from government officials for higher-level conversations about worksite wellness, and (c) access to their networks with larger associations.

Regional Focus: In order to deliver a targeted initiative that can move the needle of CVD within Georgia, the WWI will target high burden and disparate groups in a cluster of 16 adjacent counties. This cluster will be defined using surveillance data, based on a high concentration of CVD incidence and a dearth of health care resources.

A preliminary analysis of surveillance data has generated the following cluster of counties: Crawford, Houston, Macon, Peach, Taylor, Laurens, Upson, Dodge, Dooley, Pulaski, Montgomery, Telfair, Treutlen, Wheeler, and Wilcox, and Wilkinson counties.

Targeted Worksites: Worksites from around the state will be eligible to participate in the WWI, receive the Work Healthy Georgia toolkit, and engage in worksite wellness. However, worksites from the targeted county cluster will be explicitly targeted by the WWI—with a special emphasis on state worksites given the partnership that WWI has established with the State Health Benefit Plan. Among the targeted worksites, eligible and willing ones will be enrolled in the WWI through a formalized process.

Worksite Eligibility Criteria: Worksites that will be considered eligible to enroll in the WWI must meet the following criteria:

- Medium size business (50-300 employees)
- Demonstrated buy-in from top management, in the form of a letter of support. Indeed research has found such buy-in to be a key factor for success.
- Access to health risk assessments for employees to utilize. Typically, insurance providers can provide this resource to employers.
- Willingness and ability to share data with the state DPH.

Worksite Enrollment Process: In order to enroll in the WWI, a worksite representative must attend the CVHI summit and submit an application that addresses the aforementioned eligibility criteria. Worksites that are enrolled are asked to sign a MOU with the state WWI that commits them to:

1. Form a wellness committee
2. Conduct a health assessment
3. Adopt and implement at least one model health policy (out of a list of suggested possibilities)
4. Implement at least one health program and/or environmental change to support the policy's goals
5. Agree to a data sharing protocol and schedule

Support of Enrolled Worksites: Enrolled worksites will participate in regional networks with other worksites and will receive ongoing, customized technical assistance from the state worksite wellness coordinator via site visits, conference calls, webinars, and matching with area mentors when possible. The CVHI team will also explore the feasibility of a mini-grant RFP process, for direct funding of worksites.

Work Healthy Georgia Toolkit: This toolkit has been developed for Georgia worksites regardless of size, industry type, or existing wellness programs. It provides guidance on the development and improvement of worksite wellness initiatives. The toolkit provides an array of strategies and action steps, and contains resources, sample policies, and program ideas to help initiate or advance worksite wellness initiatives.

Worksite Wellness Policies: According to the Centers and Disease Control and Prevention, "Organizations are important components of social and physical environments, and they exert considerable influence over the choices people make, the resources they have to aid them in those choices, and the factors in the workplace that could influence healthy lifestyles status."¹ Formal policies are one aspect of influence. A workplace that supports health is likely to have policies that enable healthy behavior choices of employees by promoting employee health behavior, offering behavioral incentives to employees, and increasing employees' access to health resources.²

- Policies can be voluntary or legally binding. These can include, but are not limited to Formal, written laws and policies, such as federal authorizing and appropriations law or a specific smoking ban

- Policies can have substantial impact on workforce health promotion because they set boundaries around which wellness practices can be implemented.

The worksite wellness coordinator will work with worksites to select, write, and implement worksite wellness policies pertaining to overall worksite well, physical activity, nutrition, tobacco, and emergency response.

Environmental changes: Environmental change refers to the physical factors at and nearby the workplace that help protect and enhance employee health. Examples of environmental changes may include: tobacco free-policies, point of decision prompts, walking trails, and or vending machine options. The CDC acknowledges that the environment can have a profound impact on the health of individuals. Where individuals live, work, learn, and play affects their behavior. Additionally, the availability of healthy options provides increased possibilities for healthy living. As a result, positive environmental changes can reduce the burden of chronic diseases and other health problems related to obesity and tobacco use.

Evidence-based programs: Evidence-based programs may help employees reduce health risks and improve their quality of life. These programs may include chronic disease self-management programs, diabetes or tobacco cessation programs, or programs offered by insurance providers.

¹Institute of Medicine (US). Health and Behavior: The Interplay of Biological, Behavioral, and Societal Influences. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; 2001.

²McLeroy, KR, Bibeau, D, Steckler, A, Glanz, K. An Ecological Perspective on Health Promotion Programs. Health Education Quarterly 1988;15(4):351–377.

Steps for Implementing the *Work Healthy Georgia* Toolkit

Step	Action	Documentation
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain MOU with DPH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data use agreement ○ Commitment to implementing toolkit components including policy and environmental changes 	MOU completed Commitment letter from management
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a worksite wellness committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gain management support • Conduct a needs assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complete the Work Healthy Georgia Assessment Tool (pages 64-73) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze findings ○ Select a target population ○ Identify strategies to recruit employees for <i>Needs and Interest Survey</i> and <i>Health Behavior Survey</i> 	Progress Report # 1 completed and returned to state office Progress Report # 2 *for help analyzing the Work Healthy Georgia Assessment Tool email state worksite wellness coordinator
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create goals and objectives for your worksite wellness program (page 74) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use sample budget (page 75) • Begin to develop strategies to implement the program • Begin to develop strategies to maintain employee interest (incentives, etc.) • Begin to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan 	Progress Report # 2 Written goals and objectives Budget developed
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a worksite wellness program that incorporates the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct screenings for employees ○ Policies (page 26) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive worksite wellness policy (may include those policies listed below) ▪ Physical activity policy ▪ Tobacco-free worksite policy ▪ Healthy vending machine policy ▪ Healthy meeting policy ▪ Lactation/Breastfeeding policy ▪ AED/Emergency Response ○ Environmental changes (page 25) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Point of decision prompts ▪ Fitness area for employees ▪ Walking trail or measured walking area ▪ Lactation room ▪ Lunchroom with healthy options (food procurement) ○ Offer an individual behavior change 	Progress Report # 3 Policies developed and returned to state office

	<p>program (page 27)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A program/class that targets a chronic disease (heart disease, diabetes, etc.) 	
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in monthly conference calls with the state worksite workgroup 	Monthly Calls
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate your worksite wellness program 	Evaluation of goals and objectives

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