

WORKING Well

In New Jersey



New Jersey's Worksite Wellness Toolkit



Features of the Working Well in New Jersey Toolkit

The *Working Well in NJ Toolkit* provides information on the following topics:

- Key elements of healthy lifestyles in a culture of wellness in NJ worksites
- Successful strategies used by NJ employers to support and maintain a culture of wellness
- Resources to support, establish and maintain worksite wellness initiatives
- Tools to support the Return on Investment (ROI) for employers

The *Working Well in NJ Toolkit* can help employers:

- Identify the strengths and limitations of current health and wellness promotion policies, and
- Convene a Wellness Committee for the worksite, then
- Develop a Work Plan designed to improve the worksite wellness program.

What NJ Employers are saying about the *Working Well in NJ Toolkit*

The toolkit is an awesome tool for employers to reference whether they are starting from scratch or had a wellness plan in place.

Robert Wood Johnson Hospital - Rahway

We wish the toolkit had been created about a year earlier when we actually began our workplace wellness program. I had made a survey for our employees - and it took a long time to create and evaluate it on my own. The one from the toolkit is great. Also, you have some great resources and links that I use for my wellness board. The toolkit makes the wellness part of my job go smoother and I spend less time.

James Alexander Corporation

This toolkit is a great roadmap for us and was the impetus we needed to get the ball rolling. We are grateful to be a part of this project because we wanted to implement a wellness program in our organization, and this gave us the framework to get it off the ground.

Preferred Behavioral Health of NJ

Chronic Disease and Health Promotion in America

According to the CDC, chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and arthritis, are among the most common, costly and preventable health issues in our nation. Data downloaded in October 2014, from <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/index.htm> showed the following national data:

- Seven out ten deaths among Americans each year are a result of chronic diseases. Of them, heart disease and cancer together account for nearly 48% of all deaths.
- In 2012, about half of all adults – 117 million people – have one or more chronic health conditions.
- One in every three adults is obese.
- More than 22 million Americans have limitations due to arthritis.

- Diabetes is a leading cause of kidney failure, lower limb amputations other than those caused by injury, and new cases of blindness among adults.

Many chronic diseases are associated with health risk behaviors. The four most common health risk behaviors leading to illness, disability and premature death are lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use and excessive alcohol use.

- Almost half of adults do not meet minimum guidelines for aerobic physical activity.
- More than 42 million adults smoke (almost one in five). Cigarette smoking accounts for more than 480,000 deaths each year.
- 39.2% of adults eat fruit less than once a day, and 22.9% of adults eat vegetables less than once a day.
- Excessive alcohol use is responsible for 88,000 deaths per year, more than half of which are due to binge drinking (four or more drinks for women, and five or more drinks for men, on a single occasion).

Creating a Healthier Workplace





Create a Culture of Wellness in Your Organization

A culture of wellness does not happen overnight, because a cultural shift in an organization is more than a few haphazard activities. A culture of wellness must be sustainable to be effective. Barriers to an organizational shift may include confusions about where to start your efforts, or lack of participation among employees. Start small and build success into your program and soon your organization will be on the path to wellness.

A culture of wellness includes programs that educate employees about nutrition and making healthy food choices and avoiding diet trends. It might include providing healthy choices while limiting or eliminating high sugar/fat/sodium options in vending machines in the worksite. Perhaps offering and identifying healthy options in the cafeteria will be part of your culture of wellness.

Emotional health issues should also be addressed in a culture of wellness. Consider programs about stress management, anxiety and depression for your employees. Reducing the incidence of those issues will increase your organization's bottom line. Preventive care is a part of managing employee health. Participate in programs that encourage annual physicals and age-appropriate screenings.

It is important for employers to be supportive and encourage opportunities for increased physical activity. Encourage employees to participate in community events such as wellness walks for local charities. Employees, as individuals or in interdepartmental teams, can participate in the Walk NJ Point-to-Point online challenge to increase physical activity (see Walk NJ Point-to-Point in the Resources section of this toolkit). Some employers find it useful to designate a walking path onsite in the building or on company property. Employees will be motivated to take a walk during break or lunch times if a walking path is accessible and safe.