

Colorado

Changing the Work Site Environment

Challenge

More than half of all adults in Colorado are overweight or obese.* Efforts to address this issue by promoting healthful eating and physical activity should focus on the environments where people spend a significant amount of their time, such as their places of employment. However, the state found that businesses and other organizations often lack the resources to implement wellness projects themselves.

Response

Colorado's Worksite Resource Kit provides employers with resources to launch worksite wellness initiatives, regardless of the size of the worksite. In developing this kit, the Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition (COPAN) Program relied on survey data collected from 716 organizations around the state on physical activity, nutrition, and wellness programs available to employees. Divided into four sections — health education, physical activity, healthful eating, and work site environment — the kit outlines for employers how to plan, assess, and successfully implement nutrition and physical activity interventions, including information on the importance of each step and the availability of additional information resources. (The kit is being revised to include a fifth section addressing chronic disease.)



The kit is meant to complement a comprehensive approach to work site health promotion. This includes acquiring management support and creating a wellness team; gauging employee needs and interest; creating a strategic plan; addressing workplace policy and environment; and evaluating wellness efforts.

Results

The Worksite Resource Kit program was launched at the Colorado Worksite Wellness Summit in November 2003. Attendees representing 63 organizations from across the state received a kit and instructions on its use. A number of additional organizations have since received kits. In addition, select participants received mini-grants to implement programs that include informational health meetings, preventive wellness screenings, healthful-cooking demonstrations, and physical activity events. Other recipients have made policy and environmental changes that include stairway improvements to encourage walking, private rooms for nursing mothers, and healthful options in cafeterias and vending machines.

Launched in 2003, Colorado's Worksite Resource Kit helps employers of all sizes implement nutrition and physical activity initiatives in the workplace.

COPAN hopes that outcomes from this program will include a high level of interest and satisfaction among employees and employers alike with regard to work site nutrition and physical activity efforts — resulting in individuals making positive and lasting changes in their lives.

What Else is Colorado Doing to Address Overweight and Obesity?

- Developed additional resource kits that support healthful eating and active lifestyles in schools and the community.
- Created Colorado On the Move, a statewide physical activity campaign that encourages people to increase the number of steps they take every day.
- Partnered with Kaiser Permanente to develop Thriving Communities, a program that helps communities create local campaigns to improve nutrition and physical activity.

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