

Worksite Wellness – Reap the Benefits of Health

A Message From The Texas Commissioner of State Health Services

Fellow Texans:

The concern for employee wellness is an increasing trend for American business. Why? The link between employee wellness and the bottom line is clear and consistent. Employers who integrate wellness in their overall objectives find they experience reduced absences, better morale, reduced health risks, and reduced health-care costs.

The purpose of this guide is to encourage and help you launch your own worksite wellness program. If you already have a program, but are not receiving the results you expected, perhaps some of the ideas and best practices in this toolkit will help you and your employees reap the benefits of a healthier workforce.

At least 50 percent of health-care expenditures are lifestyle-related, and therefore, potentially preventable. Yet despite the \$5,000 an average employer spends on health care per employee each year, most employers are spending less than 5 percent of that on medical screenings and prevention.

The most comprehensive meta-evaluation of worksite wellness program studies shows something very exciting! It shows that worksite wellness programs are not only effective at helping to reverse the rising spiral of health-care costs, but these programs are also becoming more effective. The average cost-benefit ratio has increased from 1:3 for earlier programs to 1:6 today.

Simply put, the average reduction in health-care costs, sick leave, disability costs, and workers' compensation is more than 25 percent for well-designed programs.



Employers are becoming more aware that overweight and obesity, lack of physical activity, and tobacco are adversely affecting the health and productivity of their employees, and ultimately, the businesses' bottom line. By changing their lifestyles, employees could improve their personal health status and, ultimately, the corporate landscape.

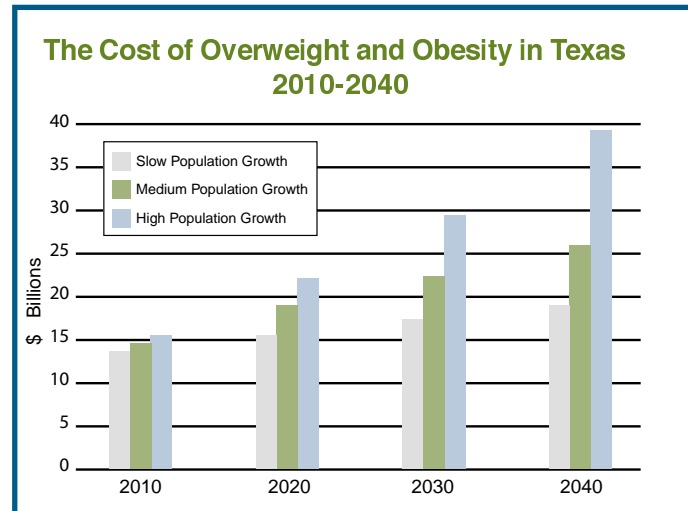
Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003

Worksite health promotion provides a long-term approach for helping keep employees well. The single most important thing you can do for your employees is to start a worksite wellness program now.

Yours in health,



Eduardo J. Sanchez, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner
Texas Department of State Health Services



A message brought to you by **Building Healthy Families**, a Texas coalition including the Texas Department of State Health Services, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas*, H-E-B, the Texas Medical Association, the Texas Hospital Association, the American Heart Association, and the Caring for Children Foundation.

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