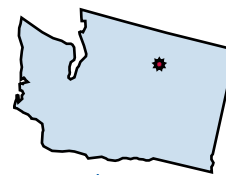


Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan Counties' Steps Program

Creating healthier working environments



Washington

What is the public health problem?

Obesity, diabetes, and tobacco use are significant public health issues in this Steps community.

- The obesity rate among adults in Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan Counties is just over 23%, according to data from the 2006* Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.
- Among adults in the Steps intervention area, the diabetes rate is nearly 7%.
- Additionally, 18% of these adults reported that they were current smokers.

How Steps is responding

The Steps Program is partnering with the business community to support healthy work-site activities.

- Because most adults spend many hours each week at work, work sites are ideal places to help employees exercise more, eat healthier diets, and quit smoking. The Steps Program partnered with the local Chamber of Commerce to establish the Healthiest Business Challenge, where companies and their employees compete by participating in healthy work-site activities.
- Businesses are grouped by size, and points are awarded for smoking cessation programs, healthy meeting foods policies, use of stairs instead of the elevator, establishment or modification of a written tobacco-use policy, and participation in a work-site walking program.
- Winners of the Healthiest Business Challenge receive an award at the annual Chamber of

Commerce banquet. All participating businesses receive recognition in a local business journal.

What is the impact?

Since 2005, 34 businesses and almost 6,750 employees completed the challenge. These businesses implemented 33 new work-site policies or upgraded existing ones related to nutrition, physical activity, or smoking cessation. For example,

- A dental office established new policies that allow physical activity breaks and encourage serving healthy foods and drinks at office meetings.
- A health care provider implemented a policy allowing 30 minutes a day, up to 2 hours a week, for consistent physical activity during regular work hours, with supervisor approval.
- An educational organization adopted nutritional guidelines for items allowed in its vending machines.

Why this program is working

According to *Reducing the Risk of Heart Disease and Stroke—A Six-Step Guide for Employers*,[†] comprehensive work-site health programs focused on lifestyle changes can lead to improvements in health behaviors among employees.

* Most recent data available

† http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/library/toolkit/pdfs/six_step_guide.pdf