

STATEWIDE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: PREVENTION IN WORK SITES

Progress in Meeker, McLeod and Sibley Counties



The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) is a community-based initiative funded by the Minnesota Department of Health. It works to prevent disease by helping create healthier communities that support individuals seeking to make healthy choices in their daily lives.

Businesses play a vital role in the health of their employees. Wellness efforts at work sites benefit not only the individual and the community, but also the business through enhanced employee productivity. Since SHIP began, work site wellness initiatives have been implemented in more than 22 work sites, reaching 3,000 employees in Meeker, McLeod and Sibley counties.



Meeker, McLeod, Sibley
Healthy Communities
www.mmshealthycommunities.org

Highlights from 2009–2013

GOAL: Increase employee wellness through improved, comprehensive work site health policies and environments

Accomplishments

- Over 100 worksites attended a worksite wellness conference to learn about improving or beginning a wellness initiative.
- Five work sites reviewed and strengthened their wellness policies.
- Sibley Medical Center added a comprehensive policy that includes offering annual health risk assessments to all employees.
- More than a dozen Meeker County businesses participate in a Worksite Wellness Collaborative that meets monthly. These partners have worked together to help develop internal wellness teams, secure work site wellness budgets, provide health screenings and assessments, promote tobacco cessation and tobacco-free sites, increase physical activity, identify healthy vending criteria and healthful nutrition during the workday.



Meeker Memorial Hospital is an enthusiastic participant in SHIP. "Promoting health makes sense," says Lori Rice, coordinator of education and marketing. Initiatives include new food choices on menus that feature low-fat and reduced-salt dishes with moderate calorie counts for patients, staff at meetings and guests at the cafeteria.



Meeker Memorial Hospital work site wellness encourages healthy nutrition

GOAL: Create healthy food environments and increase access to healthy foods at work

Accomplishments

- Twelve sites implemented policies to include more healthy choices in vending machines.
- McLeod County passed a healthy eating policy and a lactation support in the workplace policy for employees.
- Meeker Memorial Hospital added an onsite Weight Watchers program for employees, then expanded it so it is now available to all community members. To date, participants have lost more than 2,000 pounds with an average of 12 pounds per week.
- Seven sites designated rooms for lactation support.
- Six sites added worksite gardens, apple trees and raspberry bushes.
- Thirteen sites made an additional 27 changes to their food environments, including offering low- and no-cost diabetes prevention support, healthy cooking seminars, weight-loss programs, low-cost fresh fruit and vegetables on site, wellness newsletters, healthy choices cafeteria program, healthier foods for staff meetings and other work events, and an onsite farmers market.

GOAL: Decrease tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke

Accomplishments

- McLeod County and Sibley County passed tobacco-free grounds/campus policies.
- IRD Glass added smoking cessation services and incentives for quitting smoking.
- EconoFoods began offering low- or no-cost smoking cessation services.
- Custom Products added an onsite Quit Plan Program and incentives for quitting smoking.
- Meeker Memorial Hospital began offering tobacco cessation classes.



The McLeod County Employee Wellness Committee, with support from county department heads and the insurance committee, went to the county board in April 2011 and requested that county grounds become tobacco-free. The board approved the policy and it went into effect July 2011.

GOAL: Create environments that encourage physical activity

Accomplishments

- Meeker County, Meeker Memorial Hospital, Sibley County, and Sibley Medical Center added exercise equipment for all staff to use.



Bike to Work Day 2012

- Nine sites added work site physical activity opportunities, including an exercise tracking program with incentives, monthly structured fitness breaks, exercise and stretching programs, walking challenges, gym access for staff and physical activity opportunities during the workday.
- Six sites made physical activity environment changes that included offering exercise balls as office chairs to strengthen core and leg muscles, bike racks to encourage more non-motorized transportation and walking paths for employees.

GOAL: Encourage employee health and wellness through a wide variety of activities and events

Accomplishments

- Five sites started offering 13 different activities, including lunch-and-learn sessions, fitness DVDs, health fairs and programs associated with the Great American Smokeout.
- Dairy Farmers of America hosted a bike-to-work challenge.



Bike to Work Day 2012



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