

# Wellness Program Toolkit

**HEALTHY  
HOSPITAL  
INITIATIVE**



a program of the  
**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
PROGRAM SERVICES COMPANY, INC.**

# Table of Contents



Introduction.....	3
Developing a Wellness Committee.....	4
Areas of Wellness.....	5
General Guidelines.....	6
Key Intervention Areas.....	7-12
Diabetes Prevention.....	7
Obesity Prevention.....	8
Tobacco Cessation.....	9
Heart Disease and Stroke.....	10
Nutrition.....	11
Physical Activity.....	12
Conclusion.....	13
References.....	14

# Introduction



The Healthy Hospitals Initiative works to protect and enhance the health of employees and the people our hospitals serve. Our aim is to improve the nutrition environment in our member hospitals, with an emphasis on promoting low-sodium and low-sugar options, as well as strengthening and enhancing wellness resources for hospital staff and visitors. On this note, we ask that each hospital develop one additional wellness program for their employees.

This toolkit will serve as a resource for both the DCHA and your wellness teams, as we work to implement additional wellness programs within your hospitals. The resources in this document will highlight examples of such implementations as well as serve as a guide in planning successful programs.

Our toolkit is separated into four categories, one for each of the four areas of wellness. Within each category there are examples of programs that you may implement into your hospital setting, however your team may choose to implement from any of the four areas.

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# Developing a Wellness Committee



## Who to Include

- Members of the wellness committee should represent an array of occupations, experiences, and departments of your hospital. A wide demographic representation will ensure that all employee needs are accounted for.
- The committee should be composed of individuals with certain qualities:
  - Trusted by fellow employees
  - Interest in the area of wellness
  - Reliable
  - Availability to meet once a month
  - Communication and interpersonal skills



## How to Recruit

- Recruiting hospital employees can be done through a variety of ways, while in-person may be the most formal:
  - Letter
  - Email
  - Flyers, posters, etc.



## How to Plan

- Creating rules and procedures should be the first step in establishing a wellness coalition.
- Schedule regular meetings that occur every two weeks to a month, that should range from 30 minutes to two hours.
- Formal agendas should be created and distributed before and during the meeting.
- Ground rules can be detailed, or very broad:
  - Be prompt
  - Be dependable
  - Be trustworthy

## Additional Resources:

- [Society for Human Resource Management](#)
- [Mississippi Department of Health](#)

# Areas of Wellness

Per the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, hospitals should focus on four areas of wellness for their employees:



## 1. Health-Related Programs

Opportunities available at the workplace or through outside organizations to maintain or change health behaviors. For example, Howard University Hospital's *Literacy for Children* program creates opportunities to address needs of the surrounding communities through facility sponsored events.

[Learn more.](#)

Medstar Washington Hospital Center's self-management program for living with chronic conditions, *Living Well*, teaches adults how to manage symptoms, medications, and nutrition over a seven-week seminar.

[Learn more.](#)



## 2. Health-Related Policies

Formal/informal written statements designed to promote health. For example, Sibley Memorial Hospital follows written and posted guidelines implemented by Johns Hopkins Medicine to decrease the amount of sugar available in their facilities.

[Learn more.](#)



## 3. Health Benefits

Include as part of a compensation package, such as health insurance coverage and other services regarding health. For example, several hospitals offer mindful eating benefit programs at a reduced or subsidized cost, such as Weight Watchers at Work, designed to incentivize employees to eat healthier and exercise regularly. [Learn more.](#)



## 4. Environmental Support

Physical factors at or around the workplace that protect health. For example, MedStar Georgetown University Hospital's Flights of Fitness program transformed once a regular stairwell into a motivational place of exercise through murals and words of encouragement painted throughout. [Learn more.](#)

# General Guidelines

The development of worksite wellness programs will help to promote healthy lifestyles to employees, their families, patients, and visitors alike. While some hospitals may have already taken multiple steps to achieve worksite wellness, these guidelines provide an overview on the program planning process.



## 1. Management Support

Gaining support from management and hospital leadership will create a foundation for worksite wellness. Leadership that demonstrate healthy behaviors serve as a model for employees.

## 2. Create the Team

The wellness team should consist of a diverse selection of employees in order to assure well-thought plans. Creating a team will also aid in organization and the success of programs put forth.



## 3. Data Collection

Justification of a program, evaluation, along with what employees are looking for in programs all stems from proper data collection. Use surveys, field observations, and other forms of data collection to ensure success.

## 4. Operation Plan

This step is one of the most important; it should include a timeline, budget, marketing and the mission of the program. The operation plan should include S.M.A.R.T. goals and objectives.



## 5. Choosing an Intervention

Programs chosen should reflect the needs of the community, along with resources available to your hospital.

## 6. Environmental Support

This steps includes fostering a culture of health and wellness within the hospital system. Reviewing hospital policies to ensure they are inclusive of health and wellness, and assessing the physical environment to ensure it reinforces healthy behaviors.



## 7. Evaluation

Occurring after implementation of a program, your hospital should review participation, satisfaction, health behavior changes and productivity.

## 8. Impact

Effects of a program that typically occur immediately after concluding, affecting participants, stakeholders, and the environment surrounding a health behavior.

# Key Intervention Areas



## Diabetes Prevention

### Benefits:

Helping employees be more active, eat more healthfully, and maintain a healthy weight can help in preventing the onset of diabetes. For those who may already have diabetes, further complications can be prevented through appropriate measures including management of blood glucose and cholesterol.



### Strategies:

- Review current food and beverage options served at the hospital cafeteria
- Reduce salt and sugar availability, while increasing whole grains and fiber
- Provide educational materials on Type II diabetes prevention and management
- Introduce chronic illness management programs available to employees during flex time
- Partner with Health Insurance Providers to include chronic disease self-management programs such as the National Diabetes Prevention Program as a covered benefit for all employees



### Additional Resources:

- [North Dakota Worksite Wellness](#)
- [American Diabetes Association](#)

# Key Intervention Areas



## Obesity Prevention

### Benefits:

The worksite can be a great place to address nutrition and physical activity as a means of overcoming weight and obesity issues. Programs that include approaches to support behavior change are effective, such as education, tools, environmental changes and worksite policies are recommended.



### Strategies:

- Provide incentives that promote physical activity during the work day
- Post motivational signs/posters that encourage healthy eating and exercise
- Provide counseling to employees seeking obesity management during work hours
- Offer weight management programs such as Weight Watchers to employees free of charge
- See more strategies under “Nutrition” on page 10 and “Physical Activity” on page 11



### Additional Resources:

- [American Obesity Treatment Association](#)
- [Obesity Action Coalition](#)

# Key Intervention Areas



## Tobacco Cessation

### Benefits:

The negative health effects of smoking tobacco are well-known and prominent throughout health care. For example, tobacco smoke is a leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. Tobacco cessation programs can have great return of investment because smokers incur higher medical cost, see doctors more often, and are admitted to hospitals for longer periods of time, compared to nonsmokers.



### Strategies:

- Policy prohibiting the smoking of tobacco on campus
- Provide materials to support cessation policy
- Policy supporting tobacco cessation activities during flex time
- Provide counseling to employees seeking cessation
- If possible, provide cessation medications through



### Additional Resources:

- [DC Health](#)
- [Breathe DC](#)

# Key Intervention Areas



## Heart Disease & Stroke

### Benefits:

Heart disease is a leading cause of preventable death in the U.S., and cardiovascular disease continues to contribute to enormous health care costs. To reduce the risk of heart disease, an increase in physical activity, improvements of dietary habits, and maintaining a healthy weight should all be evaluated. Worksites can address these issues through a variety of strategies.



### Strategies:

- Hold a social event promoting healthy behaviors
- Promote foods that are low in sodium
- Offer blood pressure self-management training and benefits to employees free of charge
- Provide training to supervisors on general signs of heart disease/stroke
- Offer breaks/flexible hours to allow physical activity during the work day
- Partner with health insurance provider to include chronic disease self-management programs as Self-Monitored Blood Pressure Program as a covered benefit



### Additional Resources:

- [American Heart Association](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Best Practices](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Resources](#)

# Key Intervention Areas



## Nutrition

### Benefits:

Healthy eating choices can lead to the prevention and management of obesity and other chronic diseases. Many of us receive signals throughout the day, such as food marketing, that encourage overeating and/or unhealthy food consumption. Worksites can work against this through a variety of strategies.

### Strategies:

- Implement policies to reduce the availability and consumption of sugar sweetened beverages in hospital cafes, cafeterias, and vending machines.
- Implement policies and programs to promote low-sodium, and low-sugar options in hospital cafeterias and vending machines.
- Implement policies for healthy meetings and catering at hospital events
- Post nutrition information (calories, protein, carbohydrates, fat content) for all food items served in hospital dining venues

### Current Implementations from our Member Hospitals:

- Policies aimed at reducing the availability and consumption of sugar sweetened beverages in hospital cafes, cafeterias, and vending machines.
- Policies and programs promoting low-sodium and low-sugar options in hospital cafeterias and vending machines.
- Policies for healthy meetings and catering at hospital events.
- Post nutrition information (calories, protein, carbohydrates, fat content) for all food items served in hospital dining venues.

### Additional Resources:

- [Department of Human Health Services, Dietary Guidelines](#)
- [Department of Agriculture](#)

# Key Intervention Areas



## Physical Activity

### Benefits:

Regular physical activity can help control weight, strengthen bones and muscles, enhance mental wellness and mood, increase chances of living longer, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and Type II diabetes.



### Strategies:

- Offer breaks/flexible hours to allow physical activity during the work day
- Encourage stretching
- Start a walking incentive campaign
- Employ positive reinforcement through the use of motivational signs/messages posted near elevators, stairwells, and populated areas
- Provide safe bike storage
- Map out walking paths along your campus and surrounding areas



### Additional Resources:

- [North Dakota Worksite Wellness](#)
- [USDA](#)
- [Move Your Way Campaign](#)

# Conclusion



The implementation of an additional worksite wellness program is a step towards our goal of creating a culture of wellness within our member hospitals. As anchor institutions, our hospitals will work to promote healthy lifestyles to their employees, their patients, and in most instances, the communities surrounding your facility.

The resources within this toolkit have provided a foundation for the creation of a new wellness program, and it is up to your hospital's team to plan and implement such programs. With this being said, DCHA is here to help. If needed, do not hesitate to contact us with questions, concerns, and comments.

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