HEALTHY BUSINESS
A HEAL CHALLENGE
Workplace Wellness Toolkit

Adapted and used with the permission of the Worksite Wellness Committee of the Fredrick Chamber of Commerce Major Employer Group. The Keys to a Healthy Fredrick Worksite Wellness Toolkit is available by request at: www.frederickchamber.org/business-health
November 2016

Dear Washington County Employers:

HEAL of Washington County is a non-profit dedicated to inspiring healthy eating and active lifestyles to make an impact on the health of our community. We are excited to launch a free workplace wellness initiative as part of the overall Healthy Washington County community movement. This initiative was developed by the Healthy Business Committee, which includes partners from Meritus Health, Washington County Health Department, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension, Herald-Mail Media, Chamber of Commerce, Ruff Fitness and Hub Labels.

The workplace is a perfect platform for fostering positive behaviors that can improve individual health, as well as collective results for the community. It is a way to support employers to develop wellness plans, implement activities, empower employees to make informed decisions, and create a conducive environment for healthy changes. Co-workers can also provide a great support network and inspire one another through camaraderie.

There are many motivations for an employer to focus on workplace wellness: reduce health care costs; increase productivity and employee morale; and decrease absenteeism. For many business owners, investing in their employee’s health is more than just a return on investment. They truly care about affecting the rates of chronic diseases experienced by their employees every day.

This comprehensive Workplace Wellness Toolkit is being provided to help jump-start your planning process or enhance a wellness program you’re already doing. In addition, we also encourage you to sign up for the Healthy Business Challenge which is outlined on the next page. Being part of the Challenge will provide a fun aspect to your wellness work, as well as provide a method for us to recognize your efforts. There are also many resource links throughout the Toolkit and Challenge criteria that should give you ideas on how and what to implement.

HEAL plans to build on the Healthy Business each year to expand our scope and effectiveness. We look forward to working with you on this journey and thank you for considering the welfare of your most valuable assets in your company-- your employees.

Yours in Good Health,

Jenny Fleming
Executive Director, HEAL

Paul Frey
President, Washington County Chamber of Commerce
Healthy Business Co-chair

Heather Myers
Healthiest MD Businesses Western Region Coordinator
Healthy Business Co-chair
ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

Challenge criteria have been developed in three categories: Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Overall Wellness. To ensure that this Challenge represented other collaborative efforts, Challenge criteria were also aligned to the Healthiest Maryland Business initiative and health data resulting from the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment. Businesses can select criteria they plan to implement from these lists. Click this link to review the 3 categories of Criteria: CHALLENGE CRITERIA.

The Challenge will be annual, so workplaces can build on their offerings each year. All businesses achieving a minimum of 4 points/category will receive a “Healthy Business” designation. During the Challenge, HEAL will also be presenting awards to those businesses achieving the highest number of points and that go above and beyond in creating a healthier business environment.

If your business is interested in signing up, click this link: REGISTER. It is open to all businesses (profit and nonprofit) that have employees and an office/facility in Washington County.

**Challenge Timeline**

February 28, 2017: Registration Ends

March 1, 2017: Challenge begins

Fall 2017: Report Due

*Check point dates will be communicated as the challenge progresses.*
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Workplace wellness involves creating a supportive environment that promotes and enables employees to make healthy lifestyle choices. Workplace wellness programs typically include activities and health education but, ideally, wellness should permeate the organization at every level and extend to policy and the physical environment as well.

Effective workplace wellness programs do not take a “one size fits all” approach—every workplace varies by size, industry, types of employees, business model, and corporate culture—and each workplace must tailor its program to fit the needs of both the organization and the employees. The most effective workplace wellness programs are well integrated with the organization’s structure, objectives, and values.

The Wellness Councils of America outlines seven elements of a comprehensive worksite health promotion program, as defined by Healthy People 2020 and the Partnership for Prevention. The elements are:

- **Health Education**—focuses on skill development and lifestyle behavior change along with information dissemination and awareness building, preferably tailored to employee’s interests and needs.
- **Supportive Social and Physical Environments**—that reduce barriers to employee engagement and reinforce a culture of health. Establishing norms for healthy behavior and policies that promote health and reduce risk of disease.
- **Integration**—of the workplace program into your organization’s structure and value system (support of upper management, dedicated wellness staff).
- **Linkage to Related Programs**—like Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and other company functions and benefits (e.g., health benefits, safety) to optimize participation and employee engagement.
- **Screening Programs**—initiatives that help employees assess their health risks and provides referrals to appropriate resources (e.g., health coaching, medical care) to ensure follow-up and appropriate treatment as necessary.
- **Follow-up Interventions**—that support individual behavioral change, reinforce maintenance and reduce recidivism.
- **Evaluation and Improvement Processes**—to help enhance the program’s effectiveness and efficiency (e.g., changes in employee’s health risks, participation rates, sick days, etc.).
There are a wide variety of ways in which an employer can promote health in the workplace. In general, they fall into six major categories: 1) physical activity; 2) nutrition; 3) safety; 4) mental health; 5) environmental health; and 6) culture of wellness. Most workplace wellness efforts can be divided into three types:

### 3 Types of Workplace Wellness Efforts

**Policies:** Rules or regulations that encourage or enable employees to engage in healthy behaviors by providing incentives or shaping the environment to facilitate healthy choices. Examples include: healthy meeting food/beverage policies; lactation support; allowing breaks for walking; providing incentives for getting recommended preventive screenings; and providing access to well-lit and clean stairwells to promote taking the stairs.

**Programs:** Activities that provide a more structured way for employees to participate directly in healthy behaviors, generally on-site. They can be before, during, or after work hours. Examples include: organizing a walking group; holding nutrition or stress reduction classes on-site; and offering flu shots or health screenings.

**Promotions:** Efforts that connect employees with off-site resources and activities. It involves keeping abreast of events and offerings in the community and publicizing them to employees. Examples include: advertising community health fairs and flu clinics; connecting employees to off-site smoking cessation services; and encouraging employees to exercise and choose healthy foods through fliers and emails.
Why Invest in Workplace Wellness?

Working Marylanders spend an average of 9.2 hours per day at work, making the workplace a key venue for the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices. In addition, since employers shoulder many of the direct and indirect costs of poor health in their employees, there is a clear incentive to foster and maintain a healthy workforce.

Employee health benefits are one of the fastest growing costs for many employers. As these costs mount, many employers have responded with worksite wellness efforts. According to the Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA), an estimated 81% of workplaces offer some kind of health promotion program.

In short, a wellness program is an investment in human capital. Employees are more likely to be on the job and performing well when they are in the best physical and psychological health. They are also more likely to be attracted to, remain with, and value a company that obviously values them. A company’s productivity depends on employee health (Healthy Workforce 2010).

Workplace Wellness Benefits

- Control health care costs
- Decrease absenteeism and disability claims
- Increase productivity
- Attract and retain quality staff
- Boost morale
- Improve company’s image
- Be recognized as a Healthy Business with window cling and other awards
- Advertised on HEAL’s website and at press events.

According to Optum, 91% of employers offer health and wellness programs for reasons beyond the medical cost saving benefits. Reasons included to reduce employee health risks and improve employee productivity.

"I do this because I have the ability/exposure/credibility to impact people lives one by one! Its an awesome privilege!"

- Thomas Dahbura
Hub Labels, Inc.

Health Matters in the Workplace

Health risk behaviors are unhealthy behaviors you can change. Four of these health risks—lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, and drinking too much alcohol—cause much of the illness, suffering and early death related to chronic diseases and conditions.

Chronic diseases and conditions, along with the health risk behaviors that cause them, account for the most health care costs in the United States.

Eighty-six percent of all health care spending costs in 2010 was for people with one or more chronic medical conditions.

- Estimated $315.4 billion spent on heart disease and stroke in 2010
- Estimated $245 billion spent on diagnosed diabetes in 2012
- Estimated $147 billion spent on obesity-related diseases in 2008

WHAT DO WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMS COST?

Research shows that well-designed health promotion and disease prevention programs that target a variety of risk factors provide the best return on investment (ROI). ROI is achieved through improved worker health, reduced benefit expenses, and enhanced productivity. Typical programs require modest initial expense and continuing investment over the life of the program along with staff time.

Staff Time
It is essential that a workplace wellness initiative have at least one staff person or a committee dedicated to assessing the organization’s needs, planning and implementing the program, and following up to ensure that participation remains strong and program goals are met. A wellness initiative will not be effective simply by virtue of its existence; it needs a person or team that continually promotes the initiative, evaluates its impact, and uses this feedback to make improvements. For a committee, this might mean a few hours a month. A larger time commitment may be necessary if only one person takes on the task.

Business Costs
The cost of a wellness initiative varies widely based on your employees’ needs and the resources available. Wellness programs can be implemented for as little as a few dollars per employee. More comprehensive programs will have a greater impact on employee health and a better return on investment. To maximize your return on investment, consider providing help with gym memberships or other wellness activities such as on-site screenings.

You can assess your employees’ needs using some of the survey tools in Appendix 3, or by administering health risk assessments (HRAs) offered by your insurer or a private contractor.

Health and wellness benefits are an investment in your organization’s human capital, not just a cost of doing business. Investing in those strategies that target the specific needs and health risks of your employees will produce the greatest return on investment and greatest improvements to employee health and productivity. Evaluating your wellness initiative as it progresses will also help you target resources towards the most effective programs and policies.

Many tools to help you assess your organization’s needs are included in Appendix 3.

Tip: Return on investment tends to be greater with more comprehensive programs, but bear in mind that it may take a few years before you see measurable direct cost savings. Other benefits, such as improvements to employee morale and corporate image can be realized immediately.
Results-oriented programs are carefully researched, designed, and implemented. They are focused not on just offering random programs and classes, but on impacting the company’s bottom line through improved employee health. Using the following seven steps will help your program be results-oriented rather than activity-driven.

**Step One: Get Upper-Management on Board**

Having the support of **senior-level** management is **critical** to getting your program off the ground and ensuring your program’s success. **Mid-level** managers are also important allies for implementation because they provide crucial support in encouraging and allowing staff to participate.

Use the information in this guide to make the case for worksite wellness from both a health and financial point of view. Gaining leadership support will help you navigate barriers related to implementation, participation, scheduling or budgetary concerns. Once on board, it is vital that leadership frequently communicate their support for the program and, preferably, lead by example. Incorporating wellness into the organization’s mission is also an effective way of setting the tone and shaping the workplace culture.

**Step Two: Assemble Your Wellness Team**

Your wellness team, or wellness committee, should be a group of individuals with a commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles in your organization. Having a leader for whom it is part of their job responsibilities to coordinate the wellness team is useful, but it is equally important to mobilize key members from your company in order to prevent your program from faltering if your coordinator moves on or can no longer participate. Having a team can also help you stay organized and provide some accountability and credibility.

While there is no formula for the perfect wellness team, it is useful to involve key members of your organization who will ensure a broad range of perspectives are represented and can help facilitate program implementation. A well rounded team is comprised of workers from management to front line staff. You may also want to consider seeking legal consultation to ensure compliance with HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and GINA (the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act) regulations. A wellness committee should be formed as early in the process as possible and include:

- A cross-section of potential program participants
- Individuals who may have a role in program implementation or evaluation
- Management personnel
- Human resources personnel

**Tip:** [10 Great Resources on HIPPA & GINA (WELCOA)]
Step Three: Assess Your Workplace and Your Employees’ Needs

The purpose of completing an assessment is to identify your worksite's strengths and areas in need of improvement. The assessment will lead your committee to recommend actions for change to make the worksite more supportive of healthy behaviors (i.e. healthy food choices in vending machines, policies to enforce no smoking on worksite grounds or encouraging walking during break times). You may find some of the actions for supporting healthy behaviors are easy to do and others may not be feasible or efficient in your worksite. The assessment results can also be used as a baseline measure for evaluation. The initial assessment can later be compared with a follow-up assessment several months later to note progress.

Different assessments will produce different types of helpful information. In the appendices, you will find surveys and resources to use when assessing your worksite.

Ideally, your workplace assessment should contain four main components:

1- Workplace Culture & Environmental Assessment
2- Employee Needs & Interests Survey
3- Health Risk Assessment
4- Use of Existing Data

Workplace Culture & Environmental Assessment

This type of assessment obtains information about your company’s current workplace wellness programming, environment and policies and helps reveal the extent to which opportunities exist in the workplace to pursue and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Employee Needs & Interest Survey

An employee survey is used to gain a better understanding of your target audience and to get an idea of their current health habits and areas of interest.
Health Risk Assessments

Health Risk Assessments (HRA) help identify health issues and should always provide a feedback mechanism or follow-up plan to help employees understand the results and to know what information/services they can access in their community in order to take action. HRAs can range in sophistication from a self-scored questionnaire to a professionally-designed program available online. Biometric screenings, which can include tests for health indicators such as fasting glucose, total cholesterol, blood pressure and body composition can be done in conjunction with health risk assessments or may be done separately. In either case, like HRAs, there should be a follow-up plan to make good use of the results.

HRAs serve the following purposes:

- Educate employees about the link between their lifestyle choices and the development of health problems
- Encourage employees to seek appropriate care or adopt certain preventative behaviors
- Reinforce healthy behaviors through improvements in follow-up assessments
- Identify risk factors in your employee population
- Determine helpful interventions which will address the specific needs of your employees
- Serve as a tool for benchmarking, planning, and evaluation of your wellness program

High participation rates can make a tremendous difference in your ability to effectively use HRAs to assess your organizational needs – many experts recommend having at least 80% of your workforce complete an HRA at least once every three years. This will help identify programs most beneficial for your workforce and realize the greatest return on investment. HRAs will also provide useful benchmarks to evaluate what aspects of your wellness program are effective and what needs improvement.

Check with your health insurer or health benefits broker to see if they offer HRAs.

Tip:

Appendix 3 offers examples of assessment tools. These can be used as is or modified to the specific needs of your organization.

Healthiest Maryland Business Scorecard Assessment is a great resource to rate the needs of your company.
Use of Existing Data

You may be able to access other key data that already exists for your worksite. If your company is large enough to have human resources and/or information technology staff, check with them to see what information may already be available. Your health insurer is also a good source for utilization data based on health claims and pharmacy purchases. Examples of existing data might include:

- Demographic data about your employees
- Absentee rate
- Worker’s compensation claims
- Health claims data
- Pharmaceutical data
- Employee Assistance Program utilization data

Identifying this data will serve two purposes:

- It will identify what the big health issues are for your employees and it will allow you to better target those issues.
- It will serve as “baseline” data to compare against later to see if your programming has made a difference. Building this evaluation measure in at the beginning will help you prove the value of your wellness program.
Step Four: Develop and Communicate Your Wellness Plan

Having a clear vision will help your wellness program to stay on target even if there are competing priorities or if you experience turnover on your wellness team. It will help you to communicate more effectively with upper management such that you can determine what resources will be available to you during program implementation.

At a minimum, your wellness plan should include the following six elements:

1. **Vision or mission statement.** This is a brief statement that articulates the values underlying your program and its overarching goals. For example: “To establish and sustain a comprehensive wellness program in which individuals can take charge of their personal well-being and the organization can realize health care savings.”

2. **Goals and objectives.** Your goals should describe the general outcomes that you hope to achieve in the long run, while objectives are measurable results to be realized along the way. Each goal should have one or more objectives associated with it, which can help you determine whether you are making progress towards that goal. Objectives should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, and Time-bound.

**Example:**

*Broad Goal:* To create a healthier workplace  
*Specific:* Have employees get more active  
*Measurable:* Have 15% of employees participant in a 10,000 Steps program  
*Attainable:* Hold weekly walking sessions on nearby routes  
*Relevant:* An increase in exercise will decrease the risk of diseases in employees  
*Time-bound:* Achieve by May 2017
3. **Budget.** Getting together cost estimates early on will enable you to be realistic about what activities are affordable before you get too far along in the process. In addition to the more obvious costs such as instructor or material fees, be sure to consider costs such as printing, staff time, and release time for employees to participate. Review the *Comprehensive Workplace Wellness Programming Matrix* below for ideas on how to develop a plan that matches your available resources. More comprehensive wellness programs generally require greater staff and/or financial resources.

4. **Timeline.** The timeline breaks down all tasks that need to be accomplished and gives a timeframe for each task. Having dates will help keep your team on target. However, build with flexibility; be realistic with deadlines and competing priorities.

5. **Marketing.** Even the best-designed program will fail if your target audience is unaware of its existence or how to participate. Your employees should know what the program is, how they can get involved, and that they have the full support of their supervisors and managers to participate. It is important to stay positive and show your employees what benefits they may gain from participating. Think of it as though you are “selling” the program to your employees, just as you would sell a product to a customer. While some of the benefits of participation may seem self-evident, do not make assumptions about your staff’s level of knowledge or interest. It is up to you to communicate that message to them. Once your program is underway, the best marketing tool you will have is a happy program participant who advertises for you via word of mouth!

6. **Evaluation.** The key to successfully evaluating your program is to make your evaluation plan *in the beginning*. Decide now what information you want to collect (such as participation rates, satisfaction, changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior, and changes in environment and culture) and how you will collect it. Make sure your evaluation links back to your goals and objectives. Collecting baseline data related to your objectives will allow you to judge whether the program is achieving the improvements you want and will identify what aspects of the program are effective and what needs some fine-tuning. This enables effective use of resources and is helpful in justifying the continuation or expansion of your program in the future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Elements</th>
<th>Minimum Steps</th>
<th>Moderate Steps</th>
<th>Comprehensive Steps</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HEALTH EDUCATION</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Tobacco use&lt;br&gt;• Alcohol/drug misuse&lt;br&gt;• Physical inactivity&lt;br&gt;• Overweight/obesity&lt;br&gt;• Stress management</td>
<td>• Health Risk Assessments (HRAs) every 12 months&lt;br&gt;• Information and resources for healthy lifestyle changes&lt;br&gt;• Medical self-care resources</td>
<td>• Use targeted risk interventions based on “readiness to change”&lt;br&gt;• Workshops on medical consumerism&lt;br&gt;• Educational seminars, workshops, or classes</td>
<td>• Health coaching (e.g., person-to-person, telephonic, online)&lt;br&gt;• Lifestyle self-management programs&lt;br&gt;• Onsite full-time wellness manager&lt;br&gt;• Telephonic nurseline</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS</strong></td>
<td>• Open conference rooms and other work spaces for afterhours physical activity classes&lt;br&gt;• Negotiate health club discounts&lt;br&gt;• Create tobacco-free workplace&lt;br&gt;• Provide lactation support services</td>
<td>• Provide showers, subsidized gym memberships, walking trails, well-lit stairwells&lt;br&gt;• Provide healthy selections in vending machines, cafeterias, and company functions&lt;br&gt;• Provide or promote a nearby farmers market&lt;br&gt;• Provide stress management and life-skill programs</td>
<td>• In-house health management center in large locations&lt;br&gt;• Allow for volunteer health teams and budget discretionary programs in all company locations&lt;br&gt;• Provide flexible work scheduling&lt;br&gt;• Engage in other health initiatives throughout the community</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INTEGRATION OF THE WORKSITE PROGRAM</strong></td>
<td>• Involve a diverse group of employees in a broad planning effort to create ownership in the program&lt;br&gt;• Promote the program, including employee “success stories”</td>
<td>• Match the goals of the workplace program with the mission statement of your organization</td>
<td>• With senior management support, develop and use a health scorecard that is integrated with business goals</td>
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| LINKAGE TO RELATED PROGRAMS | • Create “wellness champions.”  
• Provide easy-to-access information about related programs and opportunities  
• Integrate lifestyle messages (e.g., obesity, back care) into safety meetings | • Provide custom publications pertaining to benefits, job safety, and preventive services  
• Expand health insurance coverage and reduce employee out-of-pocket costs | • Create a cross-functional team (e.g., wellness, benefits, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for strategic health promotion planning) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Work-related injury/death  
Health insurance  
Preventive services | SCRENNING PROGRAMS | • Communicate the importance of preventive screening through flyers and/or company communication | • Sponsor or team up with other businesses to offer health fairs with screenings  
• Through benefit plan, reduce cost and access barriers to preventive screenings |
| FOLLOW-UP INTERVENTIONS | • Locate and promote appropriate resources and support related to at-risk practices (be sensitive to privacy issues) | • Create incentive-based programs to encourage maintenance of positive health changes (e.g., no tobacco use) | • Benchmark health data to set short- and long-term objectives for reducing at-risk behavior |
| EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROCESS | • Conduct periodic surveys regarding employee health promotion needs/interests  
• Measure employee participation rates  
• Use post-program surveys to measure satisfaction | • Stratify aggregate health risk assessment data by level of risk (e.g., percentage of population at low, medium, and high risk)  
• Identify leading medical claims by prevalence and costs  
• Measure and track disability, workers’ compensation, and sick days | • Evaluate Return-On Investment (ROI) on selected interventions  
• Integrate employee data  
• Measure presenteeism for selective health conditions (e.g., arthritis, diabetes) |
Step Five: Plan and Implement

Utilize the results from the assessments you conducted to shape the focus of your wellness program. Remember to keep in mind the health needs of your employees as well as their expressed interests.

When planning interventions, consider these issues:

1. **The Programs.** Many program areas are suitable for most any employee population (physical activity/nutrition, disease management, work/family balance, financial management). However, take note of any special areas of need that may have emerged from your assessment data (such as worker safety).

2. **The Timing.** Your program must be implemented in a way that allows for and encourages participation. Timing is critical – offer activities at convenient times for employees. Some programs may work well on a monthly or quarterly basis and others less often. Marketing, especially at the beginning as you work to establish the program’s reputation, will also be essential.

3. **The Population.** (spouses, dependents, part time workers). Who you can include will depend on your budget, but change is more likely to be sustained when healthy behaviors are reinforced at work and home, so broadening the scope of your program can have significant benefits.

4. **The Incentives.** Incentives can provide motivation to join and/or complete a program, and they send the message that your organization is committed to making the program a success. Some examples include giveaways like t-shirts or water bottles, extra vacation time, or contributions to a health savings account. Be sure to ask your employees what incentives they view as motivating and offer recognition to every participant who achieves some goal. Find ways to spark the interest of those who would not ordinarily participate. Take care not to focus solely on biometric changes. Sustained behavior change takes time—be sure to reward participation and progress that may not be measured by getting on the scale.
When planning your program, refer to your goals and objectives and build your strategies from here. Strategies may change from year to year as you evaluate and adjust your program, but your goals and objectives will likely remain consistent over time.

*Example:*

**Goal:** Enhance knowledge for informed decision-making to inspire employees to add more healthy foods into their diet.

**Objective 1:** Have 25 employees participate in a month-long Fruits & Vegetables Challenge.

- *Strategy A:* Hang up posters with healthy messages about fruits & vegetables throughout building.
- *Strategy B:* Have employees track “quick tip” completion.
- *Strategy C:* Send weekly e-mails with quick tips and motivation.

**Objective 2:** 100% of meetings and functions will include healthy food and drink options (when applicable)

- *Strategy A:* Have employees sign up to bring in healthy items to applicable meetings for three months.
- *Strategy B:* Hold a cooking class or nutrition-related class for employees.

Once your program is planned, it is finally time to put your plan into action! Consider a kick-off event that is fun and inviting to all. A good rule to follow is to begin the program slowly and lead off with the activities most likely to succeed.

**Resources:**

- Systematically Increasing Participation Checklist (WELCOA)

- HEAL has a selection of incentive items that can bought or provided in limited quantity
Step Six: Create a Culture of Health

Studies show that healthy, long term changes occur only when a worksite’s environment and policies support employee health. Worksites environments which promote healthy eating but have vending machines filled with junk food send an inconsistent message. Those organizations which create a culture of health will improve participation rates, increase the program’s effectiveness and efficiency, and can help attract and retain the best candidates for your workforce. Healthy choices should be reflected as the norm in the day-to-day operations of your organization.

In addition, it is critical to reduce barriers to accessing wellness initiatives. Some of these can be anticipated in advance, but others will not be clear until you are well underway. It is important to continually monitor your participation rates and understand why people do not participate. For example, if employees identify that they cannot get permission to attend a workshop, talk with supervisors and ensure their buy-in and support. If you find that some employees don’t participate in a fitness event due to concerns of being “out of shape,” consider refining your marketing strategy to highlight activities that are good for all fitness levels.

Build a Culture of Health in Your Organization

Be very explicit that health is a key value and objective for your organization.

Engage support and participation from managers and supervisors. Provide incentives when possible.

Build and encourage peer support systems.

Make sure your environment and policies enable employees to make healthy lifestyle choices. For example, provide flex time and space for them to walk or order healthy foods for company meetings.

Provide activities at different times of day (e.g. before or after work, more than one time slot during lunch) to encourage participation and to prevent interruptions in service or work.

Continually promote programs and healthy behaviors through a variety of communication channels such as newsletters, emails, and posters.

Help employees to recognize health issues that impair their performance. This can be done through a workshop and using Health Risk Assessments (check out Appendix 2 for more information).

Recognize individuals who act as role models for better health.

Provide incentives for participation.
Step 7: Evaluate and Improve the Program

Regular evaluation determines which aspects of your program are meeting your objectives and which need improvement. In addition to helping you make efficient use of available resources, the ability to demonstrate improvement is essential to justifying program continuation and expansion of efforts.

Evaluations look at two major categories of results: the process and the outcomes.

**Process measures** determine whether the program is being implemented effectively and according to plan. Specifically, this evaluation seeks to find out if components of the program were actually done and done correctly. To complete a process evaluation, it is imperative that the program organizer maintains a log of all activities and materials utilized. Examples of process measures include the following:

*Participation rates.* This is a measure of how many employees are using the wellness program. You may also want to survey those who did not participate so that you can address barriers to access.

*Employee satisfaction.* This measures what participants liked about the program and what they think needs improvement. In addition to ensuring that you are offering the right programs, it shows that you value their opinion.

**Outcome measures** determine the impact that your program has on employees. Is the program achieving the expected results? To complete an outcome evaluation, it is imperative to gather baseline data by administering a pretest before the program is implemented. Comparing pretest and posttest data will help you determine what behavior change occurred and if that change is being sustained over time. Examples of outcome measures include the following:

*Changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.* These outcome measures gauge how well your employees are gaining the knowledge and skills needed to successfully adopt a healthier lifestyle. For example, how many minutes do employees engage in physical activity after the program compared to before the program? How many employees moved from the stage of contemplation to preparation?

*Changes in biometric measures.* Evaluate changes in measures such as body weight, blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and cholesterol.

*Risk factors.* The goal of risk factor evaluation is to prevent individuals with high risk factors from gaining additional risk factors and, preferably, to lower their risk. For low risk employees, the goal is to help them maintain this status.
Physical environment and corporate culture. Evaluate changes to the physical environment and organizational policies to ensure they are adequately supporting employee health.

Productivity and morale. Measuring employee turnover, absenteeism, use of sick leave, “presenteeism” (impaired productivity while on the job), and morale can be useful to demonstrating your program’s impact.

Return on investment. This is the most clear-cut way of justifying your program’s existence, but this level of evaluation typically requires expert consultant to obtain accurate data. It may take three years or more to see a return on investment.
Wellness programs should change in response to the needs and interests of your employees. Evaluation is the key at all stages of a workplace wellness initiative.

In the initial stages, it is essential for efficient planning; in the implementation phases, it helps you understand what’s successful and identifies barriers that limit program effectiveness. Over time, it sheds light on what programs are achieving desired outcomes, which can help to plan and provide justification for future wellness efforts. Modify strategies that are not effective but remember to focus on the goals and objectives in your plan. Evaluation tools are provided in Appendix 3.

Maintain Participation and Interest

**Target communications.** Personalized messages to workers have increased participation five-fold in some worksite programs.

**Conduct regular needs assessments.** Understanding your employee’s specific needs enables you to adapt to changing interests and concerns. Ask employees what they want and then strive to give it to them.

**Offer a variety of intervention options.** This increases the likelihood that everyone will find some aspect of the program that they enjoy.

**Use incentives wisely.** Well thought out incentives have the potential to increase program participation rates significantly. Remember to ask your employees for incentive ideas.

**Create and maintain a workplace culture that supports health.**

**Involve people in the planning.** Broad employee involvement stimulates interest and ownership of the program. Encourage them to market the program and create a “buzz” to stimulate interest and participation.

**Make the program fun!**

**Remove barriers.** Make program activities easy to join, easy to participate in, and convenient.

**Evaluate the effectiveness of implementation/impact on employee health outcomes.** This will identify what is working, what is not working, and most importantly, why it is or isn’t working. Sometimes the program is simply not a good fit. In other cases, there are ways to improve participation and effectiveness if you identify where the program falls short. For example, if a yoga class is poorly attended, surveying employees will help you to determine if there simply isn’t much interest in yoga or if there was some problem with implementation that could be addressed for future classes, such as a lack of publicity or a conflict with work schedules.

**Stay up to date on new ideas and what works.** Take a look over the list of ideas, model policies, and examples of successful programs to find ways you can strengthen your worksite wellness initiative.
We thank the Workplace Wellness Partners for their contributions to the development of this publication. Partners include: HEAL of Washington County • Meritus Medical Center • Washington County Health Department • University of Maryland Extension • Washington County Chamber of Commerce • Herald Mail Media • Ruff Fitness • Hub Labels Inc.

Also a special thank you to the Healthy Business Challenge committee members: Paul Frey • Dave Ruff • Thomas Dahbura • Mary Rizk • Heather Myers • Tammy Thornton • Lisa McCoy • Allen Twigg • TJ Roccograndi • Jenny Fleming • Shelby DeHaven.

Made possible with funding from the Michael G. Callas Charitable Trust.

Adapted and used with the permission of the Worksite Wellness Committee of the Fredrick Chamber of Commerce Major Employer Group. The Keys to a Healthy Fredrick Worksite Wellness Toolkit is available by request at: www.frederickchamber.org/business-health

Images provided by Google Images and Dreamstime.

Inclusion of resources in this toolkit does not imply endorsement by HEAL of Washington County or by the organizations represented on the Workplace Wellness committee. Resources are for example purposes only.

For more information about other wellness initiatives in our community, visit healthywashingtoncounty.com

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TOOLKIT APPENDICES

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Appendix 1: Criteria

Challenge criteria have been developed in three categories: Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Overall Wellness. To ensure that this Challenge represented other collaborative efforts, Challenge criteria were also aligned to the Healthiest Maryland Business initiative and health data resulting from the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment. Businesses can select criteria they plan to implement from these lists.

All businesses achieving a minimum of 4 points/category will receive a “Healthy Business” designation.

If your business is interested in signing up, click this link: REGISTER. It is open to all businesses (profit and nonprofit) that have employees and an office/facility in Washington County.

Challenge Timeline

February 28, 2017: Registration Ends
March 1, 2017: Challenge begins
Fall 2017: Report Due

*Check point dates will be communicated as the challenge progresses.*
FUEL UP: Healthy Eating

Check off all criteria as you implement them related to Healthy Eating. Make sure to include details of your activity/program where applicable.

1. Make water available throughout the day (i.e., hydration stations, water coolers throughout building, infused water in breakroom.) (1 point)
2. Promote the consumption of fruits & vegetables through motivational signs, posters, etc. (1 point)
3. Conduct a Fruit & Vegetables Challenge. (2 points)
4. Offer healthy vending machine options. (2 points)
5. Utilize and conduct SuperTracker nutrition activities. (2 points)
6. Offer a cooking class or other nutrition-related class. (2 points)
7. Provide and encourage healthy food and drink options at company meetings and functions. (2 points)
8. Provide or connect employees to lactation support services/education programs. (2 points)
9. Provide an appropriate place for breastfeeding/pumping. (2 points)
10. Conduct a Rethink Your Drink Challenge. (2 points)
11. Coordinate a farmers market for your employees (could even include employees of neighboring businesses.) (3 points)
12. Plant a company garden and engage employees in maintenance. (3 points)
13. Have on-site cafeteria follow nutritional standards that align with recommended guidelines. (3 points)
14. Create your own idea to promote healthy eating: _________________________________. (3 points)

Other Helpful Resources
- Workplace Nutrition Toolkit
- More Healthy Vending Info
- Fruits & Veggies More Matters Initiative Resources
- Choose MyPlate – free resources
- American Heart Association Food & Beverage Toolkit
- Meritus Health Services & Resources
- California Department of Public Health Worksite Program
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Healthiest Maryland
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Workplace Health Promotion
- Healthiest Maryland Business
- Nutrition Resources for Purchase
GET MOVING: Physical Activity

Check off all criteria as you implement them related to Physical Activity. Make sure to include details of your activity/program where applicable.

1. Allow employees to take scheduled “movement breaks” during the workday. (1 point)
2. Map out on-site trails or other nearby walking routes. (1 point)
3. Hold a seminar on stretching, walking or other physical activity. (2 points)
4. Offer incentives for employees to join local gyms and/or negotiate special rates. (2 points)
5. Conduct a walking club before/after work or during lunch time. (2 points)
6. Provide fitness, yoga or other classes for employees. (2 points)
7. Offer a 10,000 Steps Program to employees. (3 points)
8. Designate a room for physical activity and include pieces of gym equipment. (3 points)
9. Recruit employees to participate in a local community event that encourages physical activity (i.e., 5ks, biking, cycling, walks.) (3 points)
10. Encourage use of stairs and conduct a Stairwell Challenge. (3 points)
11. Create your own idea to promote physical activity: _________________________________. (3 points)

Other Helpful Resources
- Physical Activity Workplace Integration Tips
- HEAL Get Moving Videos
- HEAL Events (Color Splash, TEAM Cycle)
- Walk MD Program
- American Heart Association Walking Program Toolkit
- What’sNXT (for current events listing)
- Meritus Calendar of Events
- Meritus Health Services & Resources
- Stairwell signage examples
- City of Hagerstown Parks & Recreation
- Washington County Recreation & Fitness Department
- California Department of Public Health Worksite Program
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Healthiest Maryland
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Workplace Health Promotion
- Healthiest Maryland Business
FEEL GREAT: Overall Wellness

Check off all criteria as you implement them related to Overall Wellness. Make sure to include details of your activity/program where applicable.

1. Publicize and encourage use of telephone help lines. (1 point)
2. Include a wellness tip, article, video clip or other resource in company newsletters or communications. (1 point)
3. Sign up for an existing newsletter distributed by a Wellness Partner. (1 point)
4. Conduct preventive wellness screenings to include any of the following: blood pressure, body composition, blood cholesterol and/or diabetes (contact your insurance company to check what may be available.) (2 points)
5. Create a company wellness committee to assess company needs, make recommendations, and implement activities. (2 points)
6. Offer a program that teaches employees how to manage stress. (2 points)
7. Provide a quiet room or stress reduction space for employees. (2 points)
8. Hold monthly “Lunch-N-Learns” on wellness topics. (2 points)
9. Offer a smoking cessation class. (2 points)
10. Create a Workplace Wellness Plan. (3 points)
11. Meet with your insurance company to discover benefits they provide by improving employee health. (3 points)
12. Create a tobacco-free worksite. (3 points)
13. Provide HEAL data relating to any program or assessment you conduct with your employees. (3 points)
14. Sponsor an employee activity that is based upon participation, activity and fun. (i.e. softball leagues, field day, hikes, bowling, etc.) (3 points)
15. Implement the National Diabetes Prevention Program for employees. (3 points)
16. Develop incentive program for employee’s participation in any of the wellness activities you select to implement from this set of criteria. (3 points)
17. Provide onsite or off-site Employee Assistance Program (EAP). (3 points)
18. Create your own idea to promote overall wellness: ____________________________ (3 points)

Other Helpful Resources
- 211 for other areas
- More Workplace Wellness Plan Info
- Meritus Health Services & Resources
- California Department of Public Health Worksite Program
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Healthiest Maryland
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Workplace Health Promotion
- Healthiest Maryland Business
- Wellness Resources for Purchase

BONUS POINTS:
Take the Healthiest Maryland Business Assessment (4 points – to be added to your overall score)
Local contact for Healthiest Maryland Business: Heather Myers
Appendix 2: Getting Started

Using the following seven steps will help your program be results-oriented rather than activity-driven.

1. Get Upper-Management on board
   - Senior-level management—to get your program off the ground and ensure success
   - Mid-level management—implementation

2. Assemble your Wellness team
   - Wellness team: a group of individuals with a commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles in your organization.

3. Assess your Workplace and your employees' needs
   - Purpose: to identify your workplace’s strengths and areas in need of improvement as well as provide a baseline measurement for evaluation
   - Should contain:
     i. Workplace culture & Environmental assessment
     ii. Employee needs & interest survey
     iii. Health Risk Assessment
     iv. Use of existing data

4. Develop and communicate your wellness plan
   - At minimum, your wellness plan should include:
     i. Vision or mission statement
     ii. Goals and objectives
     iii. Budget
     iv. Timeline
     v. Marketing
     vi. Evaluation

5. Plan and implement
   - When planning interventions, consider the following:
     i. Programs
     ii. Timelines
     iii. Population
     iv. Incentives

6. Create a culture of health
   - Studies show that healthy, long term changes occur only when a workplace’s environment and policies support employee health.

7. Evaluate and improve the program
   - Evaluate the process and the outcomes
Health Risk Assessments (HRA) help identify health issues and should always provide a feedback mechanism or follow-up plan to help employees understand the results and to know what information/services they can access in their community in order to take action. HRAs can range in sophistication from a self-scored questionnaire to a professionally-designed program available online. Biometric screenings, which can include tests for health indicators such as fasting glucose, total cholesterol, blood pressure and body composition can be done in conjunction with health risk assessments or may be done separately. In either case, like HRAs, there should be a follow-up plan to make good use of the results.

Ask your health insurer or health benefits broker to see if they offer HRAS.

Additional Resources:
HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT
Employee Interest Survey

Check the items that apply.

1. If you could receive information for any of the health topics listed below, which would you select? (Check all that apply.)
   □ Weight Management □ Exercise Programs
   □ Smoking Cessation □ Nutrition Support
   □ Stress Management □ Diabetes
   □ Cholesterol □ Blood Pressure
   □ Understanding Health Insurance

2. Would you participate in any of the following wellness activities if available? (Check all that apply.)
   □ A seminar on physical activity □ Fitness classes for employee
   □ 10,000 Steps Program □ Stairwell Challenge
   □ Fruits & Veggie Challenge □ Cooking class
   □ ReThink Your Drink Challenge □ Farmers Market
   □ Preventive wellness screenings □ Lunch-n-Learns
   □ Smoking cessation classes

3. Where are you most likely to participate in wellness activities?
   □ At home □ At workplace □ At local fitness center
   □ Other:_________________________________________

4. How would you rate your overall wellness?
   Excellent   Very Good   Good   Fair   Poor   Don’t know/ Not sure

5. What is the best way for the worksite to make nutrition support available to employees?
   _______________________________________________________________________

6. What is the best way for your workplace to assist employees with quitting smoking?
   _______________________________________________________________________

7. What do you consider essential for a healthier workplace?
   _______________________________________________________________________

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