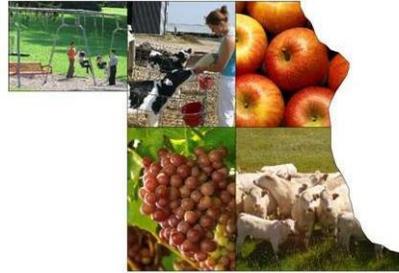


Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative

www.iowafoodandfitness.org



Workplace Wellness Programming
Fall 2007 – Spring 2008

Partners: Luther College, ISU Extension, and Iowa Wellness Council

Background Information:

Drs. Greg Lonning and Loren Toussaint of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, along with 50 of their students, organized a wellness initiative with a selected workplace in each of the five Northeast Iowa counties. The initiative was offered Luther College's fall (2007) semester and students from each of Drs. Lonning's and Toussaint's wellness courses were involved. This initiative was focused on improving healthy eating and physical activity and thereby enhancing quality of life. The initiative had two phases with 2 groups of workplaces; 5 recruited in September, an additional 5 in October. For the first phase in the initial group, there was a health risk assessment phase where each business encouraged every employee to complete a battery of health-related questionnaires to assess important aspects of health and wellness. Second, there was a wellness-programming phase where the information from the health risk assessment was used to shape and implement worksite wellness programming. In October, the County planning teams recruited 5 additional workplaces after viewing the webcast on Workplace Wellness (www.iowafoodandfitness.org - October 2007). The Iowa Wellness Council offered the Well Workplace University Training to 9 of the 10 workplaces (first and second group) in November. ISU Extension partnered with Luther College and the NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative to support the introduction of workplace wellness in a variety of ways.

Project Timeline:

September 1st or before

- NE Iowa Regional Food & Fitness Leadership Teams Identify 1 workplace per county
- Workplace needs to be committed to introducing a Wellness program
- Workplace provides a wellness contact person for this experience

September 1 – 15th, 2007

- Site visits to workplaces by Dr. Lonning and Ann Mansfield
- Coordinated student visits to the identified workplace in each county on Sept. 20th
- Dr. Toussaint and students design a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) for each workplace

September 20 & 28th, 2007

- Dr. Lonning's students make site visits to all 5 workplaces
- Goals of site visits:
 - Meet with the workplace contact(s) or team
 - Students will have a brief tour
 - Students will share information re models for wellness programming
 - Students and Workplace contact(s) will establish plan for follow-up communication and planning for November 1st "Introduction to Workplace Wellness" programming

October 1 – 12th, 2007

- All 5 workplaces will participate in the Health Risk Assessment (HRA). The HRA looks at all dimensions of individual wellness and health behaviors. The participation rates for each of the 5 workplaces are as follows:
 - Winneshiek Medical Center: 316/340 employees-- 92.7%
 - Mercy Health- Regional Health Services: 68/200 employees--33.8%
 - Farmers & Merchant's Bank: 27/28 employees--93.1%
 - Freedom Bank: 29/41 employees--69.0%
 - Tapt Out Stein-n-Dine: 9/15 employees--60.0%
 - Webcast created and viewed in all 5 counties with facilitated discussion. 5 additional workplaces recruited to participate in Iowa Wellness Council workshop in November
 - ISU – Extension - Program Offerings distributed to all 10 workplaces

November 1 – 9th, 2007

- Visit to workplace by students scheduled for November 1st & 8th
- Wellness programming will be introduced to the workplaces as well as feedback of the HRA results for their workplace
- Workplace wellness contact will have a key role in dissemination of information provided by Dr. Lonning and students
- Programming activities include: brown bag lunches, bulletin boards, newsletters, etc.

November 27th, 2007

- Well Workplace University training, 8:30 a.m. – 1:30p.m. (Lunch included) provided by the Iowa Wellness Council (www.wellnessiowa.org) and the NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative to:
 - Allamakee –
 - Farmers & Merchants Savings Bank - 28 employees
 - Good Samaritan Health Center – Postville
 - Clayton –
 - Freedom Bank – 41 employees
 - Isle of Capri Casino – 700+ employees
 - Fayette –
 - Tapt Out Stein-n-Dine (Restaurant) – 16 employees
 - Fayette County employees – 170 employees
 - Howard –
 - Regional Health Services – 200+ employees
 - McNeilus Company – Manufacturing – 120+ employees
 - Winneshiek –
 - Winneshiek Medical Center – 400+ employees
 - Gemini – Manufacturing – canceled late
 - Luther College – Wellness representatives plan to join us

What the Workplaces Could Expect from this Experience

November – December 2007 and beyond:

As part of the NE Iowa Food & Fitness Worksite Wellness assessment, we envision the 5 work sites (1st group working with Luther faculty & students) having the experience of participating in a Health Risk Assessment process, receiving meaningful feedback re areas to address in a wellness program, being provided with an introductory wellness program for their workplace and being in a position to make decisions re continued wellness programming to include utilizing the following resource options:

- Iowa Wellness Council
- ISU Extension
- Local Hospital services
- Local Public Health services
- Participate in Lighten Up Iowa
- Other Wellness program offerings in their community

As part of the NE Iowa Food & Fitness Worksite Wellness assessment, we envision the additional 5 Workplaces (2nd group) as participating in the offering by the Iowa Wellness Council on November 27th, 2007 (along with the 1st group of workplaces) to learn about Workplace Wellness as well as be provided with information on regional resources re continued wellness programming to include the following options as well:

- Iowa Wellness Council
- ISU Extension
- Local Hospital services

- Local Public Health services
- Participate in Lighten Up Iowa
- Other Wellness program offerings in their community

The goal of the NE Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative is to bring current information re workplace wellness (including regional resources) to 10 workplaces in our region in the Fall 2007. We hope to learn from each workplace how information is shared back to their organization and what happens as a result. Is workplace wellness programming introduced or improved? What is the employee participation and satisfaction with wellness programming? Are there policy changes in the workplace? What are the lessons learned?

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Follow-up from November 27, 2007 "Well Workplace University" Training:

- Dec. 7, 2007 – Follow up message to 9 Worksites
 - 1 response
 - Farmer's & Merchants – Allamakee Co. This organization had a workplace wellness program in place before they were recruited to the F&F initiative. They describe ongoing administrative commitment and strong employee participation in wellness activities.
- Dec. 10, 2007 – Created List Serve for 9 Workplaces
- Jan. 21 2008 – Follow up message to all Workplaces
 - 4 responses
 - Tapt Out – Fayette Co.
 - Regional Health – Howard Co.
 - Isle of Capri – Clayton Co.
 - Good Samaritan – Allamakee Co.
 - *These responses were posted on the website. A note was sent informing the workplaces of this.*

April 1st – Follow up message to all Workplaces with questions. Has workplace wellness programming been introduced or improved? Please describe.

- 1 response: Farmers & Merchants – Allamakee Co.

Workplace Wellness was introduced at FMSB in November 2007. For the first twelve weeks the staff was divided into four walking teams of seven each. Steps were tracked both individually and as a team. In total the seven teams logged 12,611,773 steps which equates out to 6,306 miles.

Throughout the twelve weeks, food and exercise challenges were introduced with additional points awarded to those that completed these challenges. Incentives were awarded to the top team and to the top individual steppers.

Late January we took a break from the tracking of our steps and introduced two lunch and learns. A "shopping savvy" program and a diabetes prevention program. A healthy lunch was served at each of these lunch and learns. In March those that were interested took a Saturday tour of the Oneota Food Coop. Up next is a new walking challenge with the staff again divided into teams.

What is the employee participation and satisfaction with wellness programming?

Of the 27 initial walkers, 24 actively participated and completed the 12 week walking and challenges program. Each staff member was encouraged to set a goal for themselves at the start of the walking program. Of the 24 that actively participated, 20 reported that they reached 50% or more of their goal.

Have there been any policy changes related to wellness in your workplace since November '07?

No formal policy changes per say, but we now have a wellness expense account and employees have the option of having their wellness membership deducted from their payroll.

April 29 , 2008 Discussion with Evaluator Corry Breggendahl including review of the above information. We decided that we wanted to see if could get some additional feedback from the 9 workplaces. The following note was sent out:

Subject: Spring 2008 Workplace Wellness Update
Greetings to the following Fall 2007 NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative
Workplace Wellness Participants:

Overview of Goal for Fall 2007:

The goal of the NE Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative was to bring current information re workplace wellness (including regional resources) to 10 (9 were available) workplaces in our region in the Fall 2007 and see how each workplace takes this information back to their organization and what happened as a result. Has workplace wellness programming introduced or improved? What was the employee participation and satisfaction with wellness programming? Were there policy changes in the workplace?

THANKS TO ALL THAT PROVIDED THE F&F INITIATIVE WITH FEEDBACK TO SOME OF THESE QUESTIONS OVER THE WINTER!

SPRING 2008: It's time to ask ourselves..."WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED OVERALL ABOUT WORKPLACE WELLNESS IN OUR REGION?" We are preparing to submit our YR 1 Final Report and our updated YR 2 Plan of Work for the NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative. We would really appreciate your time in giving us some feedback re the value or impact of the Fall 2007 Workplace Wellness programming/activities that you participated in. We will be taking this feedback/information to our Regional Leadership Team in May; they will be making decisions/plans for YR. 2 (2nd year of planning phase). Please, at your earliest convenience, respond to the following questions: (If you prefer that I call you for this information, please send me your ph. # and some good times to try you.) Again, your time and effort is greatly appreciated!

April 30, 2008 – One response – Farmer's & Merchant's Savings Bank

1. WAS THE WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMMING (the Luther student experience and the Health Risk Assessment process and/or the Well Workplace University Workshop) VALUABLE FOR YOUR WORKPLACE?

All of it was of benefit.

The health risk assessment set the tone for the introduction of a workplace wellness program. It gave a sense of importance as to why we should have a workplace wellness program and it provided motivation for each employee to participate. It also gave management a tool to use to assess the overall wellness of its staff.

Working with the Luther Students was beneficial to us. Sometimes we can “preach or teach” too much to our staff, so to have them come in with facts and suggestions and support us in our endeavor to introduce a workplace wellness program in front of the staff was of great benefit.

I have mixed thoughts on the Workplace University Workshop. We found we were doing many of the things they introduced so we didn’t necessarily come home with any new tools or information to try.

It would be interesting to hear from those that were just getting started.

2. WHAT IS WORKING FOR YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION REGARDING WORKPLACE WELLNESS?

Everything we tried worked. In fact, in most cases, we were surprised as to how willingly they took to our suggestions and how literally they followed the specifics of our program.

For specifics – everything has worked for the majority of the staff – walking/exercise/food challenges, Lunch N Learns, local tours, health information.

3. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE REALITIES OF GETTING PROGRAMMING INTO THE WORKPLACE?

For us it isn’t so much getting it into the workplace – it is sustaining the program that I am finding difficult. Finding the time to add this to your job duties when you put in a 50+ hour week. Much of my organizational time in getting our workplace wellness program going has been done on the weekend. The desire is there, not necessarily the time.

As a suggestion – it would be nice if we had one central person with experience in this area that we as coordinators could go to help organize, bounce ideas off and keep our spirits up when time is tight and we just can’t find the time to get the next phase of our program up and running.

To further this thought - if we (workplaces) submitted to this person the program specifics of something that has worked within each of our workplaces, and then we could have a "library" of tried and true efforts that we could pull from and utilize. This would include any printed newsletters or other health information that was used and of interest.

One completely different issue that has come up in our workplace - We have a limited budget, so providing incentives to our staff can be a challenge.

WHO NEEDS TO BE "AT THE TABLE" TO MAKE THE CHANGES NEEDED TO IMPROVE THE FOOD & FITNESS ENVIRONMENT IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

Management support is critical. If they don't show up for the Lunch N Learns or don't participate in the walking or exercise challenges, then that sends a negative message to the rest of the staff.

5. BESIDES EDUCATION (AWARENESS) & MOTIVATION, WHAT ELSE IS NECESSARY TO LEVERAGE CHANGES IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

We didn't find many obstacles along the way. It would be hard to sustain 100% participation in a wellness program, but by mixing the program up, you should be able to have something of interest for everyone at least at some point.

6. HOW COULD THE NE IOWA FOOD & FITNESS INITIATIVE SUPPORT CHANGES IN YOUR WORKPLACE TO IMPROVE THE FOOD & FITNESS ENVIRONMENT?

My thoughts in # 3 come to mind again for this question. Hopefully if we know we can all benefit by sharing what has worked in our workplace then we will be willing to submit our specific ideas.

As coordinators, we need a cheerleader and a mentor - someone to keep us on track and someone who can provide us with the material we need to keep our program on track and fresh. Someone who can visit us on site.

If there are funds available - provide some modest priced incentives for the coordinators to use during the year.

May 12, 2008 – Additional response from Good Samaritan Health Care Center – Postville

1. Was the initial programming helpful--- Our workplace did not participate in the Luther student experience. The discussion and training on HRA that we were able to participate in at the end of November, however, was very helpful for our workplace wellness effort. We were able to create our own assessment, present to staff at in-service in January, compile and present results the next month about what were the specific areas of risk and desire for education, improvement, etc. We definitely received some ideas as to what is important and what is not (in regards to wellness) for our Center's staff.
2. What's working----This is a tough question. I believe the area we have been most consistent about is keeping a wellness bulletin board in our staff lounge, which Karla and I alternate with a different topic --related to exercise, healthy eating, stress, little habits that can make a big difference, (usually includes a Healthy recipe, with lots of copies for staff to take one of if they'd like). While we ideas in addition to bulletin board topics, the lack of time is a huge factor! We are hoping that the warm weather will prompt us to get a "walking group" going over a lunch or break time for any/all who'd like to participate, but that has not yet been initiated. We did have one meeting with some other interested staff, hoping that "many hands would make light work", but even following up with that and encouraging them to initiate ideas has been a challenge.
3. Realities—The biggest reality factor is lack of time available to develop and implement and encourage. A very close second is an overall lack of enthusiasm from staff in general and the subsequent frustration to keep on providing opportunities/information etc.
4. who needs to be at the table--- this is a tough one also. Definitely the administration needs to be at the table. (He is there though --again the time factor for him and Karla and I make it difficult for him to be more actively at the table) Additional department leaders would be quite helpful to help spread the enthusiasm. There are several direct care staff across department lines who have some interest—it would definitely be helpful to bring them to the table and allow it somehow to be part of their workday---in other words, be paid for their leadership in this area.