

# Wellness Riders

## Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit

*When Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, he tried over 2000 experiments before he got it to work. A young reporter asked him how it felt to fail so many times. He replied, "I never failed once. I invented the light bulb. It just happened to be a 2,000-step process." (Jack Canfield, CSSII)*

### *Scholars*

***Katharine Lay, BS., SW, PH***

Social Worker  
Whitley County Health Department  
114 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Williamsburg, Kentucky 40769

***Judy Solomon, B.S***

Branch Manager  
Department for Public Health  
275 E. Main Street  
Frankfort, KY 40601

***Tammie Muse R.N., BSN***

CHN Supervisor  
Lake Cumberland District Health Department  
500 Bourne Ave.  
Somerset, KY 42501

### *Mentors*

***J. David Dunn, Dr. Sc. in Hyg., M.P.H.***

***Professor of Public Health***  
Department of Public Health  
Western Kentucky University  
1 Big Red Way  
Bowling Green, KY 42101

***Suzie Hamm***

Finance Manager  
Buffalo Trace District Health Department  
P.O. Box 70  
Maysville, KY 41056

# Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit

## The Wellness Riders

### Executive Summary

*“ As a society, we can no longer afford to make poor health choices such as being physically inactive and eating an unhealthy diet; these choices have led a tremendous obesity epidemic. As policy makers and health professionals, we must embrace small steps toward coordinated policy and environment changes that will help Americans live longer, better, healthier lives.” (U.S. Surgeon General).*

The importance of physical activity and good nutrition are crucial to preventing chronic diseases that account for 7 of every 10 U.S. deaths and for more than 75% of medical care expenditures. Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating contribute to obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. Along with tobacco usage these two behaviors are responsible for over 400,000 deaths each year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), obesity has reached epidemic proportions and nearly 59 million adults are obese. This epidemic not only reaches adults but also affects the percentage of young people who are overweight. The percentage of young people that are obese has doubled in the last 20 years. Promoting healthy eating and physical activity in worksites can create an environment that supports healthy behaviors, which is essential to reducing the epidemic of obesity.

Worksites can play an important role by influencing lifestyle behaviors of employees that in turn can affect change in the home with their children. Eighty-two percent of the U.S. population is linked to the worksite in one-way or another. Worksites can be environments that create change, especially when employees and employers work together to initiate efforts that result in lifestyle changes. The high demands of work, which induces fast-paced lifestyles, unhealthy eating habits, and lack of physical activity, contributes to the problem of poor health and negative lifestyle behaviors. These unhealthy lifestyle behaviors of employees influence job performance, which leads to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, lower moral, and high health insurance claims. These fast-paced lifestyles, along with the typical workweek that consist of 47 hours, family commitments and obligations influence Americans to eat “on the run” contribute even more to the problem along with the lack of physical activity.

Americans spend on the average \$17 billion each year on fast food, an average of 17 hours sitting in front of the television and 50.6 hours sleeping, this leads to 114 hours per week of sedentary behavior, which equates to nearly five full days of no physical activity. Preventable illness makes up approximately 70% of the burden of illness and the associated expenses of rising insurance costs. Every year U.S. businesses spend billions of dollars addressing the epidemic of obesity. According to a 1999 National Worksite

Health Promotion Survey, 90 percent of U.S. companies sponsor at least one health-promotion activity, but only half of these organizations regard health as a core business value, essential to business objectives.

Our project sees first hand the crucial need for health and wellness education that can be utilized by human resource managers and by health educators in the worksites. Our tool kit will provide materials and onsite health education that can enable human resource managers to implement wellness activities that will promote positive lifestyle behaviors and empower employees to take a more active approach toward improving their health.

## **Introduction**

The Wellness Riders took on the task to brainstorm ideas to incorporate wellness into the worksites. In the beginning of the group's existence, our focus was to implement a wellness guide for health departments to utilize to provide health education, wellness activities for employees. However, after further research our idea took a u-turn when our group discovered that the Department for Public Health was in the process of developing a guide encouraging local health departments to incorporate activities to improve health for their employees. Our experience compared to that of Sir Edmund Hillary who failed in this first attempt to climb Mount Everest in 1952. When asked to give a speech about the unsuccessful climb, Hillary pointed to a picture of the mountain and shouted, "Mount Everest, you beat me the first time, but I'll beat you the next time because you've grown all you're going to grow...but I'm still growing." He climbed the mountain one year later. Our first direction failed, but it did not stop us.

The Wellness Riders met on a continual basis even though the demographical distance from each other was wide. Losing a group member caused setbacks but the group overcame these obstacles and stayed persistent by meeting challenges head on and deciding on a new direction. The group persevered and worked as a team to perfect the project. Worksite wellness is a very broad topic, so the Wellness Riders narrowed the focus on how we can assist human resource managers and new health educators that do not have knowledge about health issues prevalent in the workplace. The group decided to develop a tool kit that would assist health educators by providing statistics, health information and wellness activities, that can be utilized onsite, to improve the health of employees and influence change leading to healthier lifestyle behaviors through the worksite.

## **Project Description**

The Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit provides health information and statistics on Physical Activity, Nutrition, Tobacco, Drugs, Diabetes, Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Stress, Suicide, Depression and Cancer. The Tool Kit also provides PowerPoint presentations that can be easily used by human resource managers and new health educators in health departments. A health department representative can help persuade

worksite personnel about the benefits of health education and wellness activities through the local health department.

Providing the Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit to worksites can open doors and enable health departments to assist and mentor human resource managers in the implementation of wellness education activities to ensure a healthier workforce and establish collaboration and partnerships with worksites. A healthier workforce leads to increasing productivity and a reduction in employee absenteeism.

Controlling or reducing insurance costs, which is called demand management, comes into play with worksite wellness. Demand management is aimed at helping employees, their dependents, and retirees control or reduce their use of health benefits. A way to reduce demand for health benefits is to help employees be healthier by providing smoking cessation, physical activity, weight loss, blood pressure management, blood glucose management, and nutritional programs for diabetes. Another benefit is the possibility of premium discounts for businesses with a worksite wellness program. Worksite wellness activities and education enhances the worksite image to the employees and to the community. The employers want to project an image of caring about their employees' quality of life. If employees feel they are important to the business, they may have higher job satisfaction, which reduces turnover, improves creativity, and attracts a higher number of qualified employees.

Health departments can evaluate and follow up on the progress of the worksites when using the Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit and providing additional assistance to ensure implementation.

### **Problem Statement**

Worksites have expressed a need for health promotion activities, health education and a wellness curriculum.

### **Vision**

To create a healthier and more productive workforce.

### **Goal**

Enhance the capabilities of health educators or human resource managers to provide onsite health education and wellness promotion.

### **Objectives**

1. Develop a user- friendly health promotion resource tool kit.
2. Distribute the tool kit to all Kentucky Health Departments.
3. Develop an evaluation process to measure the utilization and effectiveness of the tool kit.

## **Essential Public Health Services**

Our Wellness Rider change master project addresses two Essential Public Health Services (EPHS).

**EPHS #3 Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.** By developing a Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit, we will enable worksites to provide onsite health education, awareness, and activities, therefore, promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors.

**EPHS # 4 Mobilize Community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.** Health Departments can join with local worksites to develop partnerships to address the problem associated with unhealthy lifestyle behaviors, therefore, creating a healthier community.

## **Deliverables**

The Wellness Riders started the project by choosing topics that we felt were of significant concern in our communities. This Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit is by no means complete. It is a starting point for health educators and human resource managers to begin the implementation of health promotion education and activities within their worksite.

In addition to the Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit, we are including a CD ROM that will have additional teaching aids such as, PowerPoint presentations, website links that lead to fact sheets, brochures and promotion material that can be downloaded for educational purposes.

## **Evaluation Process**

It is our hope that health educators across the state will share this information with worksites and mentor them to develop their own health promotion initiatives. Furthermore, we are including in our Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit an evaluation form to be completed upon utilization of the tool kit to evaluate its effectiveness. Our group strongly encourages future scholars to continue with our project to add future topics of interest to worksites.

**Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit Evaluation Form**  
**Wellness Riders**  
**KPHLI**

1. Was the Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit helpful?
2. Was the Tool Kit easy to use?
3. Have you used it? If so, was it useful?
4. What part was the most beneficial to you?
5. Were the PowerPoint presentations useful?
6. Who in your facility will be using the Health Promotion Resource Tool Kit?
7. What additional health topics would you like to see included?
8. Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Completed forms should be returned to:

Judy Solomon  
Department for Public Health  
275 E. Main St. - HS1WC  
Frankfort, KY 40601

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, almost half of all premature deaths in the United States are caused by lifestyle related problems. We can prevent many of these deaths and enhance the quality of life for millions of people if we can help them exercise regularly, eat nutritious foods, avoid tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse, learn to manage stress, and recognize the warning signs of depression, suicide, child abuse and domestic violence. In addition, preventing premature deaths and complications associated with chronic diseases such as diabetes, would improve the overall quality of life and promote healthier lifestyle changes.

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that comprehensive worksite health promotion programs can lower health care and insurance costs, decrease absenteeism, and improve performance and productivity. Other benefits demonstrated in studies include improved ability to attract and retain key personnel, greater employee allegiance, and improved public image of the company. Furthermore, there is compelling evidence that a sizable portion of the billion of dollars currently spent by employers on health related costs is preventable by means of health promotion programming.

## **Leadership Development Opportunities**

### **Katharine Lay**

KPHLI has given me the opportunity to enhance my leadership and presentation skills. It has taught me that to accomplish big things in life we must learn to work together as a team and the importance of delegating responsibility. KPHLI has made me realize we must change to grow in all aspects of our lives. Procrastination causes missed opportunities that could stunt our personal growth.

My experience is similar to the tale of two seeds that lay side by side in the fertile spring soil. The first seed chose to grow, to send her roots into the dirt and unfurl her buds. The second seed chose to wait because she feared the hard, dark soil and the vast open air. When a hen scratched the ground for food, she found the waiting seed and ate it. We should never be afraid to take a risk and grow.

### **Tammie Muse**

It has been a rewarding year as a Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute scholar. It has been a time of personal reflection as I work on my personal development goals and professional growth as I have gained a greater understanding of public health as it relates to the entire health care arena. The best part has been meeting such a wonderful group of fellow scholars that I would not have had the chance to meet otherwise. To my change master team, thank you for being so dedicated and wonderful to work with. I want to thank my Director for allowing me this opportunity.

**Judy Solomon**

Being new to public health, I wasn't sure exactly what I was getting into when I became a scholar with the Kentucky Public Health Institute. KPHLI gave me a better understanding of just how broad public health is and the extent to which our communities depend on us.

This past year with KPHLI has been exciting, fun, challenging and sometimes demanding. It gave me the opportunity to work with many talented people that I would not have met otherwise. I feel honored to be part of such a hard-working and dedicated group of public health professionals.



## REFERENCES

Wellness Councils of America. *Physical Activity and Nutrition at Worksites*.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Physical Activity and Good Nutrition: Essential Elements to Prevent Chronic Diseases and Obesity 2004*.

American Journal of Health Promotion. *Our History and Philosophy*. Website: <http://www.healthpromotionjournal.com/>.

TRALE, Inc. *Worksite Health Promotion. Are Worksite Health Promotion Programs Cost-Effective?* Website <http://www.trale.com>.

Kentucky Department for Public Health. *The Kentucky Obesity Epidemic 2004*. Website: <http://www.fitky.org/>.