

Health @ Work Award 2005

Submitted by:

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1. This nomination is for a Comprehensive Program that has only been in existence for one year.
2. Description of the Program

In order to create an effective wellness program, a great deal of time was devoted to meeting with a variety of employees to better determine the vision for the programming. Information obtained from these meetings, past efforts, and researching best practices of companies with award-winning wellness programs, was used to create a mission and vision statement for the health and wellness program to be used to guide efforts. In addition, the overall program goals and objectives were determined to initially guide wellness initiatives at NWHSU.

The health and wellness program for NWHSU was branded with the name *Healthy-U* and given a logo and tagline to start to build the brand of the program and increase program awareness. Being that it is a new program, careful steps were taken to ensure a strong, deliberate business plan with a focus on assessment and evaluation.

Due to the nature of our business, there are rarely times that both staff and faculty are available. There is also a cultural problem with numerous lunchtime meetings that interfere with employees' ability to participate in programs and tend to their individual well-being. Being mindful of this, we try to offer a wide variety of programs at different times with an emphasis on activities people can do on their own time.

- Health & Wellness Advisory Council – an advisory council was formed comprised of individuals essential to developing and growing the health and wellness program; this group meets on a monthly basis.
- Health Risk Assessments were offered to all regular employees (not on-call or temporary) to collect baseline data and to guide intervention efforts. They will be repeated on an annual basis.
- A Recess program was implemented to encourage more social interaction, stress relief, and to promote an enhanced sense of community among employees. Weekly activities are offered at varying times (usually during typical lunch hours with an after-work activity once per month) and include: walking groups, games, relaxation classes, and seminars. Tracking cards are given to employees to track the average number of activities they participate in, and participation rates are collected at each activity.

- Benefits & Wellness Fair - this fair has been offered twice for employees and is planned as a continued annual event. Between 30 and 40 vendors are brought onsite that include benefits vendors (including our insurance carriers), interactive wellness booths, and a variety of screenings. Approximately 100 employees attended the fair in April of 2004, and over 120 employees attended in April 2005.
- Health Club Partnerships – NWHSU has partnered with 8 health clubs to offer various discounts for employees and students who wish to join those facilities.
- Weekly Health Education – NWHSU has an online publication updated daily that has a health and wellness section. This section is updated weekly and includes a health education article based on the monthly National Health Observances, a wellness fun fact, a healthy recipe, upcoming wellness event information, and inspiring quotes.
- A Weight Watchers at Work program was offered to address weight management concerns.
- Resistance Training Seminar – the HRA results indicated nearly 68% of our employees get regular cardiovascular exercise, but only 25% engage in resistance training. We offered a lunchtime seminar on creating a resistance training program that was attended by 25 employees.
- “10 Weeks to Wellness” – a 10-week seminar taught by a naturopathic doctor dealing with optimizing health through primarily dietary choices was offered in the spring of 2005 to address nutrition concerns. It was offered to both employees and students (who paid \$25.00 to cover the cost of program materials); there were 33 people who participated and who indicated through a program evaluation that it was very beneficial and useful. This program will now be offered twice per year.
- Nutritional Improvements in Onsite Cafeteria – we began collaborating with the owner of the cafeteria food service to educate him on what constitutes a healthier menu and compromise on changes he could make to help with efforts to improve nutritional habits. The following improvements have occurred as a result:
 - Implementing a salad bar 3 times per week to promote more vegetable consumption.
 - Offering a healthy recipe contest where employees can submit healthy recipes to the food service owner and win a gift certificate if their recipe is used in the cafeteria; this has helped to get the employees to be part of the solution rather than simply complaining.
 - Designating menu items as “*Healthy-U Approved*” to make it easier for employees to select healthier foods in the cafeteria.
 - Providing an educational poster in the cafeteria line with weekly nutrition tips and ideas for making healthier nutrition choices.

- Healthy Heart Checks – to promote heart health (and to address the HRA results of only 28% of people reporting cholesterol data having it in the healthy range and only 24% having a BMI in a healthy range), we offered special Healthy Heart Check appointments during February 2005 through our University Health Services clinic onsite. Employees were able to schedule a screening where their waist/hip, weight, and BMI were measured along with general assessment questions. If deemed appropriate, they were also able to have a full fasting lipid and glucose screening done through our lab services and received follow-up counseling from the clinician; 22 employees took advantage of these appointments.
- Stroke Detection Screenings – we hosted stroke detection screenings onsite for employees, students, and their loved ones in April 2005. We did not subsidize any of the \$70 fee, yet we filled the appointments for the first day of screening and added an additional day for a total of 74 people being screened.
- Healthy-U Bulletin Board – an informational bulletin board was created for the Healthy-U program in March 2005 that offers wellness tips and promotes upcoming wellness activities. It is displayed in the employee lounge and will be expanded into a wellness resource area in the upcoming months (including brochures and self-care guides).
- Incentive Campaigns: although the majority of our employees are physically active, we felt it was important to continue to encourage and promote their strengths as well as focusing on identified improvement areas. We offered two main physical activity campaigns in addition to the other regular program activities.
 - *Walktober* – this was a 4-week pedometer-based program offered in October 2004 with 112 people participating. The average number of days per week individuals reported deliberately adding more steps into their daily routine before the program was 3.28; upon completion of the program the average increased to 5.10 days.
 - *“do” Campaign/“do” Challenge* – NWHSU implemented the ongoing “do” campaign starting in November 2004. This includes point-of-decision signs that are changed every 2 weeks to encourage people to incorporate more activity into their daily routines as well as educational handouts and messages promoting physical activity.
 - As a part of the “do” campaign, indoor walking routes were created inside our main campus building (1/4 –mile, 1/2 -mile, and 1-mile routes); the routes have been used daily by employees.
 - There are also rotating do-crews every 2 weeks who recognize individuals for being active with prizes (typically \$5 gift certificates); to date 42 employees have been recognized.
 - We are also offering the Hennepin County “do” challenge as a spring incentive program and have 108 employees registered to participate.

- Healthy-U Website – content for a comprehensive website was created. The website includes information on almost every type of exercise, relaxation and meditation, health education, diseases and health conditions, interactive quizzes and assessments, nutrition and weight management, natural healthcare, and more. It is designed to be a “one-stop shop” for all quality health and wellness information. The website is in the process of being finalized and will have an extensive system of tracking its utilization (including specific sections).
- Race for the Cure – to promote cancer awareness and physical activity, NWHSU organized a team for the 2004 Race for the Cure for employees and their loved ones; 34 people participated on the team. We have organized another team for 2005 and have 56 people participating this year.
- Expanded Smoking Policy – the smoking policy was expanded in September 2004 to not only forbid smoking in the building, but to also forbid smoking anywhere on the property and school grounds.
- Wellness Champions – to gain more employee buy-in and ownership of the Healthy-U programs, individuals were selected throughout the organization to be “wellness champions”; they help promote activities and recruit participants.

3. Goal in Implementing Program

The **Healthy-U** program mission is: *to educate, empower, and support employees within a culture of wellness to improve and maintain their overall health and well-being.*

Specific program goals were set for the first year, including:

- a. Identify and reduce health-related risk factors within the NWHSU employee population.
- b. Develop and implement health and wellness awareness and education programs that focus on employee wellness encompassing mind, body, and spirit.
- c. Create and implement policies and procedures that create a culture of wellness.
- d. Design, implement, and assess a variety of wellness behavior-changing activities.

Since the program was in its initial year, the goals were all designed to start to collect baseline information. This information was intended to be used for future evaluations and comparisons and to start to create more awareness and begin the journey towards slowly changing the organizational culture to become a “culture of wellness.”

4. Measurement of Goal

- a. Two different Health Risk Assessment (HRA) tools were offered to all regular employees (246 eligible) in May of 2004 to collect baseline data and determine risk factors within the employee population. The Personal Wellness Profile (PWP) was offered through Wellsource and had a response rate of 47.6%. The Holistic Lifestyle Questionnaire (HLQ) was also offered to look at six dimensions of wellness; the response rate for this survey was 32.5%. Due to our university being bound by research protocols and the Institutional Review Board, we were unable to offer any incentives for completing the HRA tools, so we are happy with this response rate. We are offering these assessments again in May 2005 and will compare the results to 2004 to guide future programming and evaluate our efforts.
 - i. Based on these responses, four key areas were identified as having the greatest need for improvement: nutrition, weight management, balanced physical activity (to include strength training and flexibility), and stress management. Since nutrition was identified as needing the most improvement, our primary focus for intervention this past year has been on promoting healthier nutrition habits with a secondary focus on the other three areas.
 - ii. We also track the number of employees who participate in the Benefits and Wellness Fair and any other screenings offered, as these also help determine risk factors. An e-mail survey was distributed to employees after this year's fair to determine how useful they felt the screenings and other booths were and what they found to be valuable.
- b. The programs implemented included programs for mind, body, and spirit. Because this was the first year of the program, the data collected have primarily been participation rates. Seminars have been evaluated with questions inquiring about amount learned and plans to put knowledge into practice and to determine the usefulness of the programs. The hope is that as more program elements are included and the organizational culture starts to change, the participation rates will increase.
- c. The most significant policy change was the expansion of our smoking policy. Previously, smoking was not permitted in any university building but was allowed outside. In September of 2004, the policy was expanded to include university property, so smoking is no longer allowed on university grounds.
- d. A wide variety of programs were offered to employees to encourage positive lifestyle changes. Each incentive program asked participants to set a goal for the program and report on their progress towards reaching their goal; this was used to evaluate the impact of the program effecting behavior change beyond the specific program objectives (i.e. increasing daily steps). Participation rates are tracked for every program offered. If a program is educational in nature, evaluations are included to determine knowledge gained and usefulness of the information provided. The number of visits to the online health and wellness update are tracked weekly; this will be expanded to include detailed tracking of the *Healthy-U* website and determining which sections are specifically being utilized.

5. Percent of Employees Participating/Affected

With wellness information posted throughout the building and sent via regular e-mails, the majority of our employees receive messages to some degree. Based on participation rates, we have had nearly 50% of our employees participating in some type of program. Program specific participation is detailed in the previous section. We anticipate participation to continue to increase as we tweak programming based on evaluation efforts.

6. How NWHSU would use the \$500 in future health promotion efforts

The \$500 prize money would be used to provide “wellness scholarships” to employees who wish to participate in programs or screenings that include a fee (i.e. the “10 Weeks to Wellness Seminar”, stroke screenings, or planned future bone density screenings).

7. Lessons Learned

- The biggest lesson learned during this past year is that it takes time to change a culture and that one person can make a difference, but it helps to have multiple people to buy in to the program. We are already seeing a small increase in participation in repeat programs from last spring (i.e. 120% increase in participation in our annual Benefits & Wellness Fair, 165% increase in our participation for the Race for the Cure team).
- We need to celebrate our accomplishments and realize that the culture is already starting to change. The key is to be diligent about communicating information and initiatives through multiple channels (i.e. flyers, e-mails, posters, group voicemail messages, and company website) and to be consistent.