

Craven Community College - Keys to Wellness at the Worksite

In January of 2006, Dr. Scott Ralls, President of Craven Community College sent representatives to the NC HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Training Workshop. Vickie Moseley Jones, Human Resources Director, and Toni Blount, Health and Physical Education Instructor, returned from the training with ideas and inspiration to recruit members to serve on a new employee wellness committee.

The HealthSmart Keys to Wellness Committee was assembled with representatives from across the college, and as their first step, they administered an employee interest survey to assess their employees' needs. More than half of the total 200 employees responded to the survey.

The committee found that employees were most interested in:

- Having healthy snacks available for purchase
- Participating in group exercise classes
- Learning stress management techniques
- Working in a tobacco-free environment

After administering the employee survey, the committee planned a large-scale kick-off event that coincided with the Fall Semester Employee Opening Day session at the college. The committee members presented the survey results to all faculty and staff and outlined program ideas for the coming year. The day also included stretching exercises led by Dr. Ralls (see photo above), stress management classes, a health fair, and a healthy, delicious lunch (see photo in right column). Over a hundred employees received lunch bags, pedometers, and general information about upcoming plans.



The committees' year-long plan includes:

- Bridge Walk/Run on October 21
- Flu clinic for over 100 employees
- "Lunch and Learn" session on healthy eating
- Biggest Loser Holiday Challenge
- Walking clubs starting in January
- Spring kayak/canoe trip and group hiking

- Continued investigation into healthy food offered through the snack bar and vending
- Participation in the Craven County hand-washing & pandemic flu campaign

The Keys to Wellness Committee received funding from an innovation grant from the Craven Community College Foundation, and they work closely with the New Bern Cancer Care to bring cancer awareness programs to the campus. By planning activities and environmental changes that capture the interest of the employees, the committee is already a success.



Key Elements of Success:

- Administrative/management support from the beginning of the project
- Grant monies to support the initiative
- Strong involvement from human resources
- A strong and dedicated wellness committee that is representative of the campus

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Tobacco Cessation – What Works?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed a guide to effective health promotion programs, The Community Guide to Preventive Services. The Community Guide provides a systematic review of “what works” in several health promotion areas, including tobacco cessation.

There are two important strategies. First, offer individuals access to low-cost nicotine replacement therapies (ie, the patch) and counseling services through a healthcare provider or telephone support line. Together, medications and counseling are the most effective way to help individuals quit. The second strategy, providing tobacco-free worksites, significantly increases the effectiveness of the first and is a good project for worksite wellness committees.

Smoking bans and restrictions have been proven very effective in helping to reduce exposure to environmental smoke. Tobacco-free policies can also reduce the number of cigarettes an individual smokes in a day and increase the number of smokers who quit. Smoking bans (tobacco-free worksites) are more effective than smoking restrictions (smoking allowed in certain areas of the worksite). The Toolkit offers step-by-step guidance in creating tobacco-free policies as well as three sample tobacco-free policies that your wellness committee can adapt and use.

For more on “what works” in tobacco cessation, visit www.thecommunityguide.org.

Local Resources for Tobacco Cessation

Local professionals can help your committee to create a tobacco free worksite and offer group cessation classes and activities. Check out the following county-specific resources:

Health Promotion Coordinators

Research has shown that one of the most effective ways to help individuals to quit using tobacco is to provide tobacco-free worksites. If your worksite is interested in going tobacco-free, contact your local health promotion coordinator. These health department professionals work with community partners to make policy and environmental changes around nutrition, physical activity and tobacco cessation. You can find contact information at: www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com. Click on Contacts to access the directory.

Good Health Directory

There are many community-based programs that offer resources and classes for quitting tobacco. Some classes and resources are free while others do have a charge. To find tobacco cessation resources and classes in your community, visit: www.ncpreventionpartners.org. Click on Good Health Directory under Quick Links.

Remember! Each of these community classes or resources is different. Use the checklist (Appendix K, Quit Now workbook) in the Toolkit to assess any group cessation program before using it at your worksite.



Remember!

Fill out your online committee development or action plan survey to be eligible for the Worksite Wellness Survey Drawing. The survey link was emailed to you with this newsletter. Questions? Contact a member of the Team.

State Health Plan Generic Medications and Tobacco Cessation Benefits

On Monday, December 4th, the North Carolina State Health Plan announced two major pharmacy benefits for Plan members. Through these initiatives, members will be able to receive generic medications for free for three months and an over-the-counter tobacco cessation product will be covered for the first time through participating network pharmacies.

Through the first benefit offering, generic drugs will be dispensed free of charge to State Health Plan members from January 1 through March 31, 2007. To participate, members will take new prescriptions or re-fills for generic drugs to their local participating network pharmacy, and present their State Health Plan ID card. The pharmacy will automatically waive the copayment.



The State Health Plan also announced that all State Health Plan members are eligible to receive generic over-the-counter (OTC) nicotine replacement therapy patches as a covered benefit beginning January 1, 2007.



Each year, Plan members can receive coverage of a 10-week course of therapy. **The generic patches will be available to Plan members for free from January 1 through March 31, 2007.**

After this initial period, each prescription during the 10-week course of therapy will cost \$5. To participate, members are required to obtain a prescription for generic OTC nicotine replacement therapy patches from a physician.

“We are investing in our members’ health,” said Executive Administrator George C. Stokes. “Members will benefit from improved health and decreased chance of long-term illness. And, the State Health Plan expects long-term savings resulting from decreases in smoking-related medical expenditures.”

As a wellness committee representative, you can promote these new State Health Plan member benefits by printing out and posting a handout with details from www.shpnc.org.

Wellness committees can also:

- Remind Plan members about Web-based resources available at www.shpnc.org
- Post fliers from the Toolkit with the free NC QuitLine information (1-800-QUIT-NOW); All posters in the Quit Now section of the Toolkit feature this number
- Encourage employees to ask their health care provider for information and support to help them quit using tobacco

For more information about the new State Health Plan tobacco cessation resources, visit www.shpnc.org. Contact the NC Quitline by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). State Health Plan members may also contact a NC HealthSmart Health Coach for educational materials by calling 1-800-817-7044.

The HealthStart Activity in the Quit Now workbook, “The ‘I Quit’ Challenge” is a ready-made tobacco cessation program. The Challenge allows participants to set their own goals & comes with all the materials you need to implement the program.



Getting your Management on Board

While working towards the goal of making your worksite smoke-free, one of the most important things for your committee will be to get the management on board. Though short-term activities like the 'I Quit' Challenge can be successful in promoting employee participation and boosting morale, the committee should strive to work with the management to adopt tobacco-free policies at the worksite.

Discuss with your management the benefits of becoming tobacco-free (see page 13 of the Quit Now section in the Toolkit) and the resources that are now available from the State Health Plan to help employees quit tobacco use (see 'State Health Plan Generic Medications and Tobacco Cessation Benefits' section of this newsletter). The policy section of the Quit Now workbook has several resources to help you discuss the effects of tobacco use at your worksite, including a Smoke Report Card (Appendix C) and a survey to assess the effects of second-hand smoke at your worksite (Appendix D).

Toolkit Available for Download

The entire contents of the NC HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Toolkit are now online and available for free download. Visit <http://www.shpnc.org/worksite-wellness.html> to access the Toolkit. All worksite surveys, meeting agendas, letters, sample policies, posters, handouts, motivational quotes, sign-in sheets, pledge cards, certificates are on the Web site as PDF files.

Also, some of the documents such as the action plan, meeting agendas and sign-in sheets are available in Microsoft Word. Your committee can personalize these documents by inserting your worksite name, logos or changing the content. The newly developed, user-friendly action plan template is also available!

Worksite Wellness Webinars

Starting January 23, the Worksite Wellness Team will provide weekly webinars on topics that are relevant to your committee's work. Webinars are online meetings that allow multiple users to attend at the same time, while chatting with one another on the computer and by phone.

Webinars are scheduled Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of most weeks. Each week, there will be two "open forum" times scheduled for committee members across the state to chat with one another and with the Team. These forums include a 10 minute presentation followed by discussion time. Additionally, every Wednesday, the Team offers a longer presentation on a specific topic. Upcoming topics include: Getting Started: Establishing a Worksite Wellness Program, Writing Your Action Plan, Encouraging Employee Participation & Developing an Evaluation Plan. A schedule of upcoming webinars will be sent to each committee contact.



The NC HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Program is a part of the NC HealthSmart wellness initiative designed to help State employees improve or maintain their health. The aim is to assist state agencies, community colleges, public universities and public schools in creating a culture of wellness at their worksites. Currently, the NC Division of Public Health administers the program. Additional resources and support for public schools will be launched in 2007.

