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# State Efforts to Keep Employees Healthy: Worksite Wellness Programs

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# Definition: Worksite Health Promotion Program

- Employer initiatives to improve health of workers/their families
- Designed to avert disease and support prevention

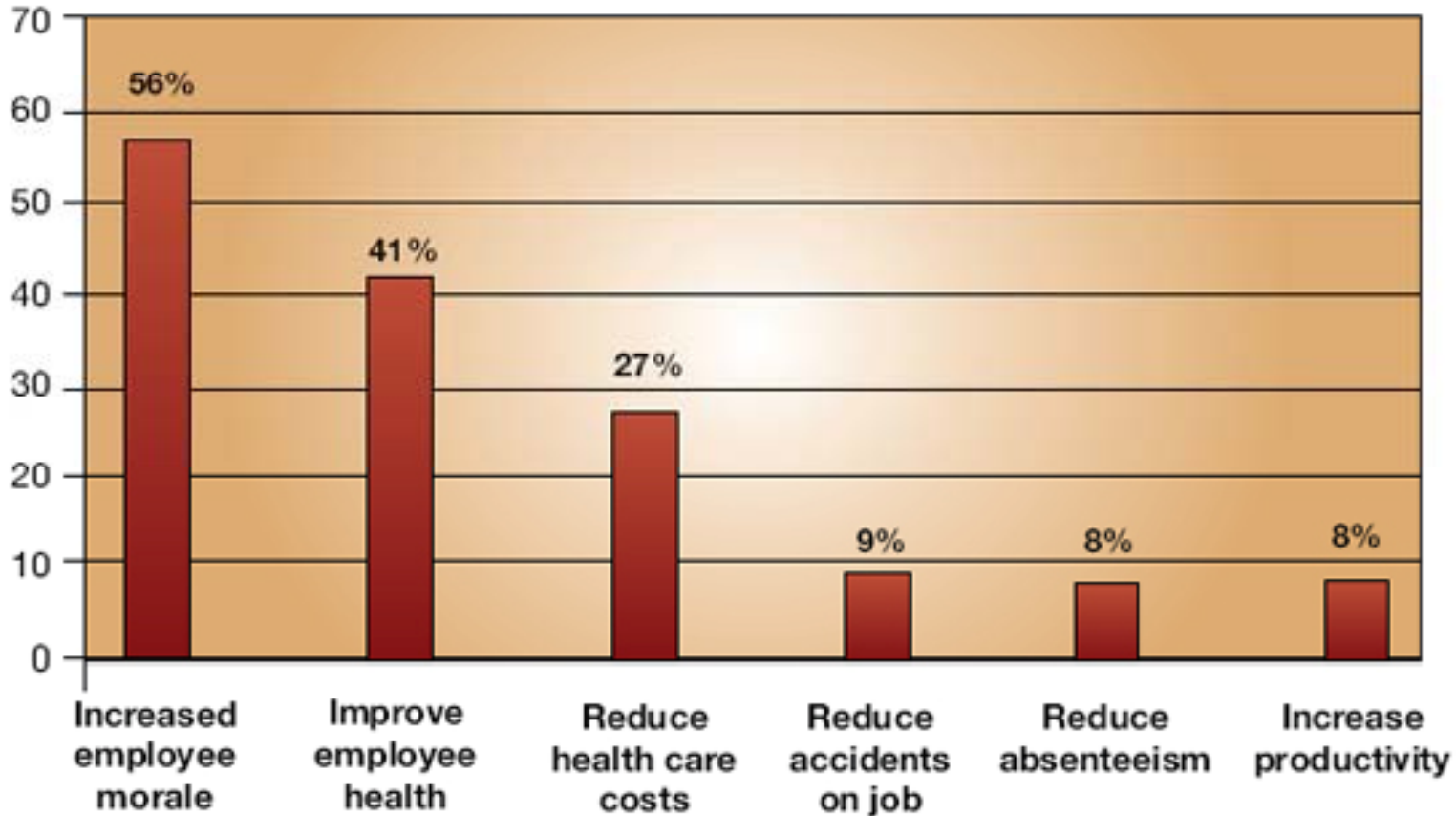


Source: Baase, 2009

# Why the Workplace?

- Concentrated group; share a common purpose and culture
- Communication is relatively straightforward
- Supports available for employees to change unhealthy behaviors
- Organizational norms help promote certain behaviors/discourage others
- Can offer incentives for participation

# Benefits of Integrating Health Promotion Into the Workplace



# Best Practices in Workplace Health Promotion

1. Organization/management commitment
2. Incentives for employee participation
3. Effective screening and triage
4. Effective targeting of high-risk individuals
5. Evidence-based interventions
7. Effective planning and implementation
8. Employee input in developing goals and objectives
9. Wide variety of program offerings
10. Effective communications
11. Ongoing program evaluation

Source: Partnership for Prevention, 2008

# Examples: State Worksite Wellness Efforts

- California



- North Carolina



# Step UP – Overview

- 3-year worksite wellness pilot program – CA Department of Health Services (CDHS)
- Changes in policies, corporate culture, physical environment
- Program integrated:
  - Prevention
  - Behavior change
  - Best and promising practices in workplace health promotion





# Step UP in Action!





# Step UP – Program Components

1. Branding/promotion efforts
2. Wellness website and “Monthly Fit Tips”
3. Weekly farmer’s market within walking distance
4. Annual educational campaigns – blood pressure, body fat screening
5. Stairwell improvements
6. Free cookbook with healthy recipes
7. Healthy vending machine choices
8. Walking routes promotion
9. Noontime wellness talks
10. Exercise room improvements
11. Exercise buddy bulletin board
12. Employee worksite wellness committee
13. Nearby deli – healthier food choices



# Step UP – Program Evaluation: Individual Outcomes – HRAs

- Health Risk Assessments (HRAs) offered annually to employees
- Results 2007 vs. 2005:
  - Low-risk employees – maintained or slightly improved health status
  - High-risk employees decreased slightly
  - Employees reporting daily stair use increased
  - Employees walking or biking at least once a week increased
  - Employees responding “rarely/never” to daily fatty food intake increased



# Step UP – Program Evaluation: Individual Outcomes – Survey

## Employee survey (n=600)

- 99% believed nutrition and regular physical activity contribute to higher productivity
- 93% felt it is important to have a worksite wellness program
- 92% wanted an employee wellness website
- 89% were aware of Step UP program
- 71% called the program “very” or “extremely” valuable
- 50-75% reported participation and/or interest in program components

# The Future of Step UP

- Department of Public Health and the Department of Health Services (formerly DCHS) adopted Step UP as a formal part of the organization



# NC State Health Plan – Project Overview

- North Carolina Institute of Medicine and CHI recommendations re: worksite wellness
  - Lessons learned from previous studies:
    - Worksite wellness program interventions
    - Incentives for employee participation in worksite wellness programs
  - Design of a wellness program for NC State Health Plan members

# NC Wellness Program – Guiding Principles

- Overarching goals:
  - A “healthier” workforce through health risk reduction
  - Reduced rate of increase in health care costs
- *All* teachers and state employees eligible
- Participation should be *voluntary*; positive incentives for participation, achievement of personal health goals





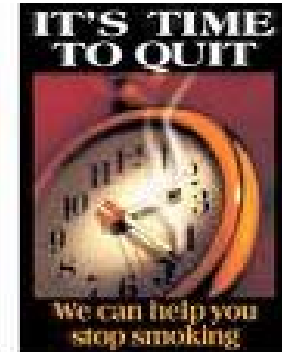
# NC Wellness Program – Recommendations (1)

- Program open to *all* state employees
- Vendor administration of HRA, confidential reporting of results, summary information on risk profiles to plan
- Ensure *all* members receive education re: benefits of health behavior changes and how to access wellness program



# NC Wellness Program – Recommendations (2)

- Create an employee committee to review HRA content, confidentiality process, etc.
- Offer meaningful incentives for:
  - HRA completion
  - Post-HRA participation in risk-reduction interventions
- Offer options for HRA follow-up related to: smoking cessation, diet and physical activity, and stress reduction



# NC Wellness Program – Recommendations (3)

- Establish participation and outcome goals
  - HRA completion = 80% of all state employees
  - Minimal migration of lower risk employees to higher risk categories
  - Overall # of “high-risk” employees reduced by 5%/year
  - Longer-range goal: 70% of employees either low- or moderate-risk
- Develop an evaluation plan for program overall and subcomponents

# The Future of Health*Smart*

- HRAs are voluntary
- For all except retirees, higher premiums for people with a BMI over 30 or who smoke, unless they enter into an approved weight reduction program or smoking cessation program



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# Worksite Wellness Incentives: Policy Options

- Insurance premium discounts or rebates for member participation in wellness programs
- Insurance premium discounts to group rates for employers with wellness programs
- Tax credits to employers for providing wellness programs
- State contracting preferences for businesses offering wellness programs

# Legislative Options for Worksite Wellness: What Can You Do?

- Support wellness programs in state-purchased health benefits and in state agencies
- Honor businesses and insurers with exemplary wellness programs
- Designate wellness-related events – e.g., “Health, Wealth, and Wellness Week”
- Create a worksite wellness resource center – information on best practices, return on investment (ROI)



# Resources

- Baase, C. *Principles of Integrated Health: A Path to Health Care Reform*. Testimony before the U.S. Senate HELP Committee. February 23, 2009.
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- Partnership for Prevention. *Workplace Health Promotion: Policy Recommendations that Encourage Employers to Support Health Improvement Programs for Their Workers*. December 2008.
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# Thank You!

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