

Hawaii Department of Health Applies the Principles of the National Prevention Strategy to Multi-Agency Worksite Wellness Programming

Hawaii develops a comprehensive worksite wellness initiative for all state agency employees

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) convened “America’s Plan for Better Health and Wellness,” a learning community with representatives from Hawaii, Mississippi, and Delaware. The learning community supported ongoing work that advances the goals of the National Prevention Strategy (NPS) and provided an opportunity for state information exchange. The goals of the learning community were to: a) Increase the capacity of state and territorial health agencies to advance a multisector state collaborative effort that addresses a health issue, as highlighted by the National Prevention Strategy; b) provide insight and opportunity to address challenges inherent in multisector initiatives; and c) foster peer-to-peer networking and shared-learning opportunities.

Hawaii is applying NPS goals and strategies to improve the health of the state’s workforce through a comprehensive worksite wellness program for state agencies. According to the *Employee-Union Trust Fund Report, 2012*, state and county employees comprise approximately 5 percent (67,250 people) of Hawaii’s total population. In 2009, the Hawaii State Department of Health (HDOH) organized a Government Agency Worksite Wellness Task Force made up of state agencies, county government, government employee unions, health plans, and the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund (EUTF). The task force provided opportunities to increase education and support of worksite wellness in state agencies. Although the momentum of the task force stalled between administrative leadership changes, it was able to relaunch and is ongoing.

Steps Taken

- HDOH has begun work on a comprehensive worksite wellness program, including a Government Worksite Wellness Request for Proposals, to support other state agencies in their adoption of the worksite wellness initiative. They have collaborated with state partner agencies to identify opportunities for joint work, including nontraditional partners such as the Department of Public Safety.
- A public-private partnership—the Hawaii Health at Work Alliance—validated HDOH’s initiative by working to develop a statewide infrastructure that provides worksite wellness resources and technical assistance to employers.
- An insurer sponsored two meetings where more than 150 people representing large and small employers in the state received training on worksite wellness. A health actuarial company will provide ongoing training on wellness programs each quarter for employers.
- EUTF has recently hired a worksite wellness coordinator and is moving forward to adjust its health plan contracts to include worksite wellness in the scope of work. The EUTF Health Committee invited HDOH staff to make a presentation on previous partnership efforts between the DOH and EUTF and current opportunities.

- The Hawaii Bikeshare System Project (expected to begin in 2015) is an effort endorsed by Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell and Hawaii Governor Neil Abercrombie to enhance worksite wellness efforts in metropolitan Honolulu. HDOH supports efforts to increase active transportation and the development of policies that create opportunities for walkable and bikeable communities. Partnerships between the city and county of Honolulu, the Environmental Protection Agency, HDOH, and other stakeholders have been instrumental in providing the funding for a feasibility study for Honolulu's first major Bikeshare project. Employers who are part of the Hawaii Health at Work Alliance participated in the focus groups that led to the development of the proposed governance and Bikeshare system project.
- HDOH has worked to create nutrition guidelines for purchasing and procuring healthy foods in cafeterias and vending machines serving the agency, as well as at state-sponsored functions.
- HDOH has been developing a healthy vending pilot program in collaboration with the Department of Human Services Ho'opono program (blind vendors), as required by the Randolph-Sheppard Act, which provides for the opportunity for blind vendors to operate vending on state and federal properties. Currently, HDOH is working with eight vendors to develop the project and will be launching the pilot in May 2014. HDOH is currently working to develop and design project materials, such as healthy snack identification stickers and other marketing materials, adapted from the *HHS/GSA Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations (HHS/GSA guidelines)* and materials from other states.
- HDOH has worked with major retailers such as Sam's Club and Costco to identify healthy offerings for vendors to purchase and contacted healthy snack and beverage retailers to uncover other potential distributors. A list of healthy foods and beverages has been compiled. Interviews have been conducted with vendors and employees have been surveyed in participating buildings to gather important information to assist with development of the pilot.
- The pilot rollout will begin May 2014 after survey data is analyzed, the healthy food and beverage list is finalized, and educational and promotional materials are developed and printed. The Healthy Vending Project kickoff will feature a product taste-testing press event at HDOH, with healthy vending options and promotional materials to share information and generate excitement about the product changes. The HDOH cafeteria will be outfitted as a model healthy vending site.
- This project supports the Hawaii Obesity Prevention Task Force's priority to create policy and environmental changes for healthy food access and availability. The [task force will participate](#) in the rollout of the Healthy Vending Project event at HDOH.

Results

- Worksite and Employee Wellness continues to gain recognition and prominence in the state as an important approach to improving the health and wellbeing of Hawaii's citizens, with the interest and participation of EUTF.

State Story



- The Healthy Vending Project will offer new options for healthy snacks for Hawaii's employees. Evaluation will be conducted to gather presales and postsales data, and process evaluation will be conducted to monitor and document project implementation.
- The upcoming Bikeshare program will increase opportunities for state employees to engage in physical activity. The city and county of Honolulu is preparing to establish a bike corridor on King Street, a major thoroughfare in urban Honolulu. Evaluation of the bikeshare program is still being developed.

Lessons Learned

- Creating opportunities for health vending requires not just the will of leadership and coordination of stakeholders, but also the availability of healthy vending items from wholesalers and manufacturers.
- Sometimes resistance to an idea makes movement forward difficult, if not impossible. In this situation, project leaders should consider other, perhaps smaller-scale, options for advancing the project's ultimate goals.
- Nontraditional and unexpected partners might be the best advocates for the goals of the project. For example, the Department of Public Safety has emerged as a proponent of HDOH's worksite wellness initiative.
- NPS applies across federal, state, and county agencies and resources, and can provide a basis to begin conversation to envision how to reach common objectives.

For more information:

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