

Workplace Wellness: Building a Culture of Health

AN EVALUATION OF THE STATEWIDE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP (SHIP) WORKPLACE WELLNESS STRATEGY

“We have countless stories from people telling of their personal journey and successes since implementation and today we see people walking, eating healthy, requesting more healthy options and working as a team to be a wellness centered organization. We still have work to do but it is making a difference in the lives of our employees.”— SHIP Workplace Wellness Employer

About workplace wellness

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a culture of health is a working environment where employee health and safety is valued, supported, and promoted through workplace health and wellness initiatives, policies, benefits, and environmental supports.¹ Across Minnesota, employers are working with local public health through Minnesota’s Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) to create sustainable workplace wellness initiatives.

In 2018, more than **800** SHIP workplaces made changes to promote a healthier work culture for **86,000** employees by creating workplaces that support breastfeeding and help employees quit smoking, eat healthier and get more physical activity.²

92% of SHIP workplaces indicated that their wellness program efforts advanced due to SHIP.³

SHIP workplace wellness evaluation

In 2017-2018, the Minnesota Department of Health evaluated the impact SHIP workplace wellness has on workplaces and their employees. The evaluation study used two data sources: 2018 Wellness Coordinator Survey (which include nearly 200 SHIP employers) and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Healthy Workplaces Organizational Assessments (which include 153 employers’ baseline and follow-up assessments).

Findings

Employers are **strengthening their wellness strategies** while participating in the SHIP workplace wellness initiative. For example, data from the 2018 Wellness Coordinator Survey³ indicate that SHIP:

- **tripled** the number of employers who added healthy food options at company functions
- **doubled** the number of employers who have breastfeeding friendly rooms.

Comprehensive workplace wellness initiatives can exert a **positive influence on the health behaviors** that lead to chronic diseases and obesity.⁴ According to results from the 2018 Wellness Coordinator Survey,³ SHIP employers overwhelmingly reported observing positive changes in healthy eating and physical activity among their employees:



73% of employers observed improvements in healthy food and beverages consumed by employees at work.

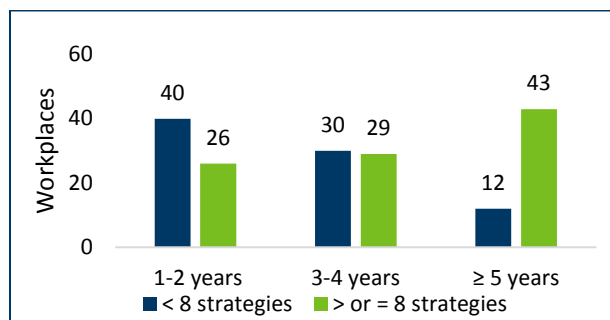


67% of employers noticed positive changes in physical activity among employees.

SHIP partnerships make workplace wellness succeed

SHIP data indicate that employers have the foundation to build a more sustainable comprehensive workplace wellness program. Through SHIP, employers have strengthened their wellness plans and committees and increased leadership support. Results from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Organizational Assessments indicated that wellness plans and leadership support were strengthened due to SHIP. When employers started with SHIP, 19 percent indicated that they had strong leadership commitment for workplace wellness; this increased to 49 percent after one year in SHIP.⁵ The results from the 2018 Wellness Coordinator Survey also indicate that the longer a workplace partner works with SHIP, the more workplace wellness strategies it is likely to have in place (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Comparing Number of Strategies Implementation by Length Participating in SHIP



A well-designed workplace wellness initiative offers an organizational structure and physical environment that supports employee health and encourages positive lifestyle behaviors. While the keys to success may vary from study to study, the constants are strong leadership support and making healthy choices the norm in an organization,^{6,7} which are the cornerstones of the SHIP workplace model. The results from the 2018 Wellness Coordinator Survey and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Organizational Assessment affirm that implementing the best practices found in the SHIP workplace model lays the foundation for a sustainable, comprehensive workplace initiative.

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June 18, 2019

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References

- ¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Workplace Health Model <https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/model/index.html>
- ² Minnesota Department of Health, 2018 SHIP Monitoring Partner Sites, August 25, 2017 and August 31, 2018.
- ³ Minnesota Department of Health, 2018 SHIP Wellness Coordinator Survey 2018
- ⁴ Soler, R. E., Leeks, K. D., Razi, S., Hopkins, D. P., Griffith, M., Aten, A., ... & Pronk, N. P. (2010). A systematic review of selected interventions for worksite health promotion: the assessment of health risks with feedback. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 38(2), S237-S262.
- ⁵ Minnesota Department of Health, BlueCross BlueShield Healthy Workplaces Organizational Assessment administered to SHIP employers 2014-2017.
- ⁶ Mattke, S., Liu, H., Caloyeras, J., Huang, C. Y., Van Busum, K. R., Khodyakov, D., & Shier, V. (2013). *Workplace Wellness Programs Study: Final Report*. Rand health quarterly, 3(2), 7.
- ⁷ Stokes, G. C., Henley, N. S., & Herget, C. (2006). Creating a culture of wellness in workplaces. *NC Med J*, 67(6), 445-8.