



Wisconsin Worksite Wellness Workshops 2008 Summary Report

Background / Summary

The epidemic of overweight and obesity in our Nation and in Wisconsin did not occur overnight and will not be eliminated overnight. Overweight and obesity is a multi-faceted issue, one that cannot be adequately addressed by any one program or intervention; therefore numerous partners must work together to address this issue.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), Nutrition and Physical Activity Program with input from the Wisconsin Partnership for Activity and Nutrition (WI PAN) created a resource kit for worksite wellness in 2006 and revised it in 2007. The kit is a step-by-step guide to facilitate worksite wellness programs to reduce obesity and other chronic diseases and conditions through healthy lifestyle changes. Lifestyle factors such as nutrition, physical activity, tobacco use and stress are of particular importance because they contribute greatly to morbidity and mortality, and because they are modifiable. Increasing wellness programs in the worksite setting is one of the objectives in the *WI Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan*. This project used a public-private partnership to provide training sessions using the proven strategies and methods contained in the *Wisconsin Worksite Wellness Resource Kit*.

Worksites were targeted because they are a relatively controlled environment where people spend much of their waking day. By changing policy and environmental factors, while also providing programming for individuals, it is hoped that the worksite changes would lead to healthier lifestyles centered on improved nutrition and increased physical activity. The purpose of this summary is to describe the process and model used to promote healthier lifestyles through the workshops.

The *Wisconsin Worksite Wellness Workshop Initiative* was intended to:

- Train individual worksite employees on the use of the WI Worksite Wellness Resource Kit
- Develop a cadre of worksite wellness outreach agents to continue trainings within their region with interested employers.
- Focus worksite efforts on interventions that are practical, achievable, and realistic for organizations to increase the percentage of healthy employees.
- Provide resources that are easy to use.
- Encourage policy and environmental changes that support healthy lifestyle behaviors and foster positive attitudes toward improving health.
- Set up a local network for companies having any level of employee wellness to share ideas and learn from each other.

SUMMARY:

Objective – Get more worksites trained on & using the WI Worksite Wellness Resource Kit and to develop a cadre of worksite wellness outreach agents to continue trainings within their region with interested employers.

Methods – Provide full-day regional trainings at six sites throughout Wisconsin. The AM session was geared to wellness “partners” or “outreach agents” who already provide wellness services to worksites. The PM session was directed to employers and how to use the kit in individual worksites. Course evaluation results were collected at all sites.

Findings – Over 325 people attended the six workshops. Approximately 100 of those people were wellness partners who can continue to train others on using the resource kit. Overall response was positive.

Implications – Trying to create statewide change requires partners at the local level to implement effective programs. Finding willing partners who already provide some wellness services and then training them on a tool they can use is a way to leverage those existing resources.

Methods

Members of the WI PAN Business Subcommittee agreed to help plan and present at the regional workshops. Their employers also agreed to underwrite the lunch expenses at one meeting each (other lunch expenses were covered by the WI Comprehensive Cancer Control Program and the Nutrition and Physical Activity Program).

The workshops were held in Eau Claire, Stevens Point, Madison, Appleton, Waukesha, and LaCrosse from April 30 through July 11, 2008. The morning session was tailored to wellness “partners” or “outreach agents” who already provide wellness services to multiple worksites. The afternoon session focused on helping individual employers of all sizes and types learn how to use the kit in individual worksites.



Each training session covered the six-step process in the kit and provided hands-on activities with the tools and worksheets that are part of the kit.

Step 1: Why Have a Wellness Program

Step 2: How to Get Started

Step 3: Assessing My Worksite

Step 4: Programming For My Worksite

Step 5: Making Decisions on Where to Focus

Step 6: Evaluating My Wellness Program

Results

Over 350 people attended the workshops and more than 200 participants completed the workshop evaluation forms. There were four general questions about the training that were rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. The results for each question analyzing the percent of attendees scoring the workshop either a 4 or 5 were:

Overall, the workshop content and materials...

90% ...Provided information relevant to my work

90% ...Were well organized

88% ...Were easy to understand

79% ...Will be of immediate use to me

The morning breakout sessions (4) and afternoon breakout sessions (3) asked questions about the

individual session components. Each breakout session was rated on: a) Its usefulness to the person's work; and b) Overall rating of the content. The seven sessions were each rated on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being poor and 4 being excellent. The results for each question (7 for each area) analyzing the percent of attendees scoring the workshop either a 3 (good) or 4 (excellent) were:

90% - 97% ...On usefulness to my work

88% - 97% ...Overall rating of content

There were also many favorable written comments in the open-ended type questions. A sampling of those comments can be found in the following scroll.

- "Quick-moving, interactive, material presented was right on target, great take-aways"
- "What did you like about the workshop? ... "Everything – it was all very practical and helpful."
- "Outstanding workshop – thank you."
- "Entertaining and enlightening"
- "Very upbeat, great energy level kept the flow of the workshop moving."
- "Speakers were great – handouts too"
- "Toolkit and resources listing are awesome!"

Ancillary Results:

Along with the actual training content, there were several other related outcomes, such as:

- 1) The workshops guided participants through several worksheets, including the worksite assessment. All participants went back to their work place with an idea of what they currently have in place and some potential strategies to implement.
- 2) Each workshop built in time for participants to “network” with their colleagues. This established a starting point for potential follow-up conversations.
- 3) A sign-up and mini-survey at each workshop established a “Learning Circle” or sharing group for that region so they can meet and network regularly.

- 4) Wellness partner services for each region were catalogued and distributed to participants so that worksites looking for services could be matched with providers. Wellness partners were encouraged to stay for the afternoon session to network with prospective clients.
- 5) The workshops established a core audience for future statewide initiatives. One of those initiatives is a web section that shares “Favorite” programs from worksites with anyone who is interested. An initial request resulted in 20 submissions and more will be added with the initial roll-out of the Favorites Website and additional requests.
- 6) The workshop initiative provides an example of a partnership that can be used by other WI PAN committees to engage members to help implement objectives in the state plan.

Conclusions

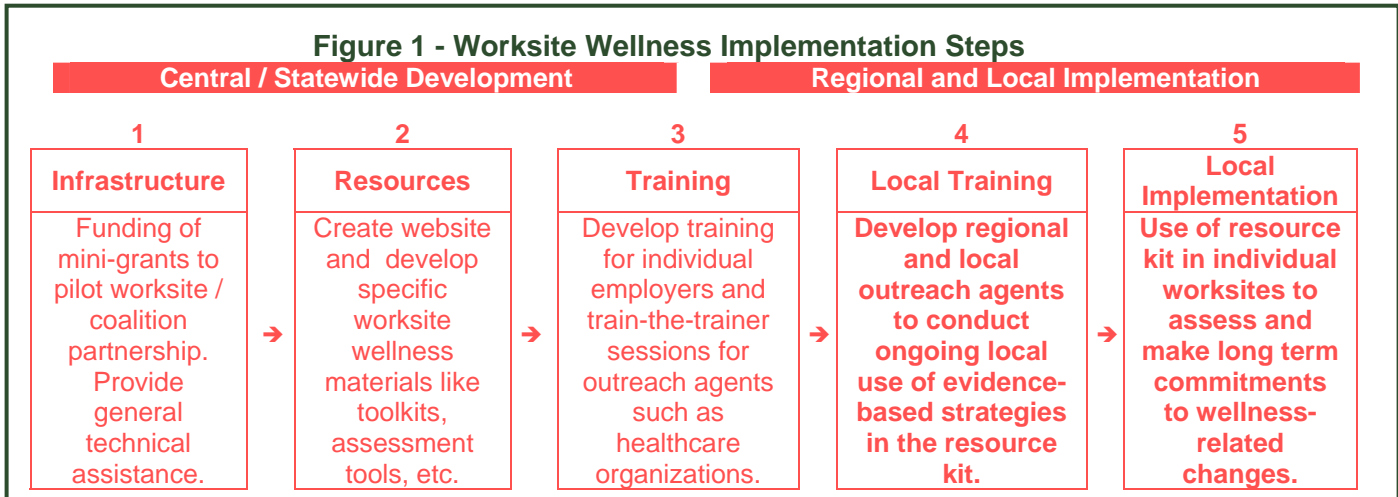
The full impact of these workshops remains to be seen. The initial goal of getting the word out on the resource kit and understanding how to use the evidence-based strategies has been met with very positive and insightful feedback. Connections have been made with many worksites interested in wellness and a first set of “wellness partners” or “outreach agents” has been trained. Encouraging that group to train employer groups as part of their outreach activities is very likely the key for greater dissemination and sustainability of these efforts.

Future steps should include involvement of other outreach agents such as healthcare organizations, health insurers, brokers, local health departments, wellness vendors YMCAs and other providers of preventive health strategies.

Implications

- The workshops succeeded on several fronts:
- 1) They created a partnership with several public entities that helped develop and present the six workshops;
 - 2) They resulted in over 350 trained people from various organizations;
 - 3) They created a first group of “outreach agents” that can continue to spread the message and use the resource kit when they meet with clients;
 - 4) They established a connection to a targeted audience for future work.

The workshops continue implementation of the worksite wellness plan (see Figure 1 below) that is part of the larger Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan. Most of the necessary infrastructure pieces such as development of a central web site, development of key resource materials and trainings, and identification of evidence-based strategies are now in place. Trainings have occurred in a variety of settings over the past year and a specific Train-the-Trainer curriculum has been developed and used in the regional workshops. Future efforts will be focused on Steps Four and Five: to expand the list of trained outreach agents and expand the number of local worksites using the kit and the related strategies.



Now that initial training has occurred, The Nutrition and Physical Activity Program role in future worksite wellness initiatives will be to broaden the number and type of outreach agents and educators

who are already providing some preventive or wellness services to worksites. By developing a larger number of trained people as local outreach resources, the reach of the useful tools in the resource kit will increase markedly. The WI PAN Business subcommittee has identified the following possible implementation steps:

- 1) Conduct more Train-the-Trainer sessions, but specifically target additional outreach agents such as healthcare insurers, healthcare providers, local health departments, YMCAs and other core groups having access to a broad range of people and social groups.
- 2) Create a list of "approved" or "certified" WI Worksite Wellness Resource Kit trainers and post it on the web by regions. This would make it easier to match up outreach agents/partners with individual worksites. Anyone who attended the AM & PM regional trainings would be "approved". This might also create an interest/incentive for additional trainings for those who want to be "approved".
- 3) Provide more training of individual businesses in a group setting, but target the largest employers in a region to get the greatest "reach".
- 4) Videotape a workshop and post it as a webcast for those who are unable to attend in person.
- 5) Target universities and colleges to add a session on the resource kit to class offerings for future health promotion professionals. Also pursue the possibility of using trained students to do short internships where they go out and assess and provide follow-up recommendations to worksites on wellness programming and options using the kit. This could be done in several specialty college areas as part of a specific course or as independent study.
- 6) Get more Business subcommittee members active in doing shorter, informational presentations to local groups such as Rotary to stimulate interest in their communities. Train them on the "short" version of the powerpoint that has been developed. Also enlist them to recruit more "Favorite Program" submissions and think of other ways that the 30+ people who are now listed as WI PAN Business subcommittee members may contribute to this initiative.
- 7) Survey workshop participants for other resources that would help their efforts. This could include expanding the "Favorites" program and posting the Worksite Partner Services grids we created for each region to connect worksites with available services. This might also create more interest from those partner services that aren't on the list to be added.
- 8) Seek other media opportunities to increase awareness and promotion of the kit and other resources.
- 9) Seek funding or assist others in obtaining funding to provide seed money to local coalitions and worksites as an incentive to develop wellness programs. This type of incentive will also increase the reach and impact of this intervention.

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- Mortenson, Matzelle & Meldrum (M3)
- Unity Health Insurance
- WI Comprehensive Cancer Control Program