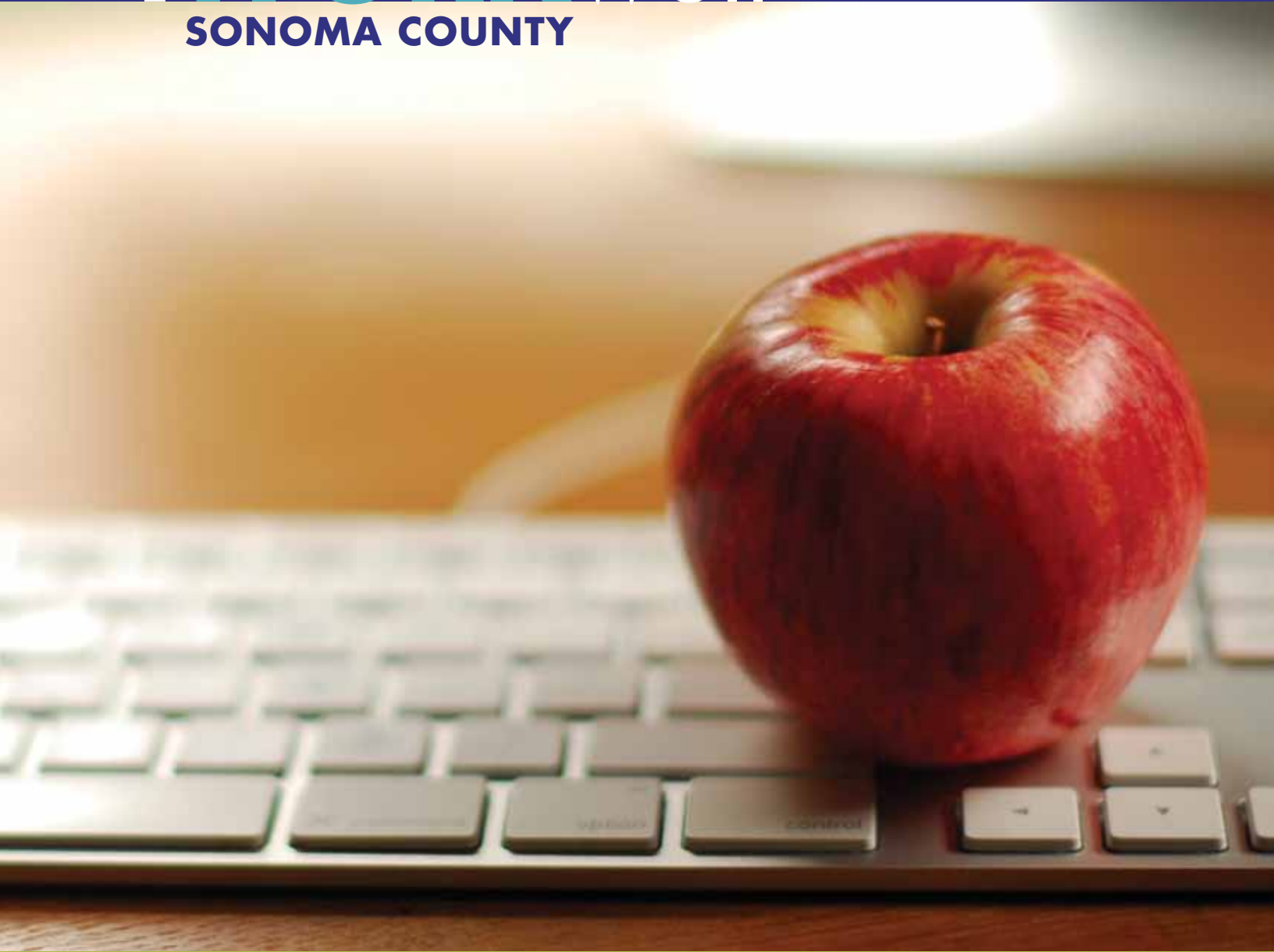


# iWORKwell

SONOMA COUNTY



## Benefits

of an Employee Wellness Program

# Your company's productivity depends on employee health.

Employee wellness programs have come to play an important role in improving employee health. They have been shown to improve productivity and lower insurance costs in the following ways:

## REDUCE EMPLOYEE HEALTH RISKS

Employees with the highest number of preventable “risk factors” cost more than low-risk employees.<sup>1</sup> Reducing health risks, such as smoking, high blood pressure, and overweight, can increase productivity and decrease absenteeism, employee turnover, and health claims.<sup>2,3</sup>

### Business Savings

- The Coors' Corporation 8-week “Lifecheck” resulted in documented reductions in blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and weight.<sup>4</sup>
- The Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area saw workers' weight drop by an average of 4.8 pounds (among program participants), and 24 employees quit smoking after two years of the program.<sup>4</sup>

## REDUCE ABSENTEEISM

Studies show that worksite wellness programs can reduce absenteeism. How? Employees that are healthier are sick less often and are less likely to miss work. Some businesses have seen as much as a 14% reduction in days lost to illness or disability as a result of implementing comprehensive programs.

### Business Savings

- Control Data Corporation estimates that its Staywell program, evaluated over a six-year period, has saved the company at least \$1.8 million as a result of reduced absenteeism among employees.<sup>4</sup>
- A multi-site intervention involving a police force, chemical company, and banking firm showed that weekly participation in supervised exercise reduced use of sick leave by an average of 4.8 days per person in the year following program implementation.<sup>5</sup>



Bike to Work Program  
JDS Uniphase

## What businesses are saying...

“Truly successful companies place as much focus on the health and well being of their employees as they do their balance sheets and income statements. The establishment of a formalized employee wellness program is a natural extension and commitment in support of this philosophy and value.”

— Jim Adams,  
CEO; REACH Air Medical

Farmers Market  
Medtronics

## INCREASE JOB SATISFACTION & EMPLOYEE MORALE

Changes in attitude are more difficult to verify objectively than changes in health or individuals' use of medical leave. Nonetheless, a few studies have demonstrated an association between worksite health promotion and employee disposition.

A study of employees at companies participating in comprehensive health promotion programs found these employees had a more favorable attitudes towards organizational commitment, supervision, working conditions, job competence, and pay and fringe benefits than people who worked at nonparticipating companies.<sup>6</sup>

## LOWER HEALTHCARE COSTS

Medical cost savings from health promotion programs may be less evident than productivity gains, especially for smaller businesses and those whose health plans are not self-insured. Nevertheless, more than 75% of healthcare costs are due to chronic health conditions.<sup>7</sup> These medically high-risk employees are medically high-cost employees. They use more healthcare and generate higher claim costs than their low-risk peers.<sup>8,9,10,11</sup>

## Business Savings

- Studies show that lowest healthcare costs are associated with individuals with only one to two risk factors. As the number of risk factors increases, so too, do costs.<sup>7</sup>
- A 2005 review of employee wellness programs studies showed that multi-component worksite wellness programs can lead to an average reduction in sick leave, health plan costs, and workers' compensation and disability costs of slightly more than 25%.<sup>12</sup>

## What employees are saying...

"I enjoyed the overall atmosphere and culture that promoted walking during breaks, eating salads at lunch, and snacking on fruit."

— Sonoma County Human Services Employee

"What I liked the most about the employee wellness program was that management was concerned about the health of all their employees in the workplace."

— La Tortilla Factory Employee

## Local success...

In 2010, Becoming Independent, was able to reduce their healthcare renewal costs by approximately \$50,000 and avoid increases in additional benefits, including chiropractic, life insurance, and dental insurance.

This was due to a worksite wellness program that included a "menu" of wellness options and high level of employee participation, through which employees collectively lost 1,011 pounds in less than a year.

## Get Recognized...

The Sonoma County Healthy Business Recognition Program is a voluntary certification program that recognizes employers for developing and implementing exceptional employee wellness programs.

Employers are awarded Bronze, Silver or Gold classification based on the breadth and depth of their employee wellness initiatives. Visit [www.sonomaEDB.org/wellness](http://www.sonomaEDB.org/wellness) to complete a simple online application.

Employee Walking Program  
Southwest Community Health Center



### WHAT CAN YOUR BUSINESS DO?

#### 1) Visit Sonoma County's Online Worksite Wellness Toolkit.

The free Worksite Wellness Toolkit provides information on developing an action plan to implement or improve a worksite wellness program and set up programs and policies that give you a return on your investment. Content includes information on developing a workplace wellness team, sample assessments, sample wellness goals and objectives, program and policy design tips, program and policy implementation tools, evaluation, and wellness resources.

Website: [www.norcalwellbeing.org/wellness-toolkit.php](http://www.norcalwellbeing.org/wellness-toolkit.php)

#### 2) Contact one of the following employee wellness program resources.

Information on each program can be found at [www.sonomaEDB.org/wellness](http://www.sonomaEDB.org/wellness).

Northern California Center for Well Being's Employee Wellness Program  
Workforce Health Initiative Project by St. Joseph Health System  
HealthWorks by Kaiser Permanente  
Live Well for Life by Sutter Health  
360° Health by Anthem Blue Cross  
Health and Wellness by Blue Shield of California  
MHN a Health Net Company

## HEALTHACTION

The iWORK Well initiative is a partnership of business, non-profit and government agencies that support local employers to develop and implement worksite wellness programs.

[www.sonomahealthaction.org/ww](http://www.sonomahealthaction.org/ww)

### References

1. Health Management Research Center. The Ultimate 20th Century Cost Benefit Analysis and Report: The University of Michigan; 2000. p. 1-39.
2. Wright D, et al. Comparing excess costs across multiple corporate populations. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 2004;46 (9): 937-945.
3. Burton WN, et al. The association of health risks with on-the-job productivity. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. 2005;47(8): 769-777.
4. Aldana SG. Financial Impact of Worksite Health Promotion and Methodological Quality of the Evidence. *The Art of Health Promotion* 1998; 2 (1).
5. Ten Research Studies You Can't Afford to Ignore, Part IV. *Worksite Health* 1998;5 (3): 23-27.
6. Holzbach RL, Piserchia PV, McFadden DW, Hartwell TD, Herrmann A, Fielding JE. Effect of a comprehensive health promotion program on employee attitudes. *J Occup Med* 1990; 32 (10): 973-8.
7. Chronic Diseases: The Power to Prevent, The Call to Control: At A Glance 2009. <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/AAG/chronic.htm>, downloaded January 28, 2011.
8. Health Management Research Center. The Ultimate 20th Century Cost Benefit Analysis and Report: The University of Michigan; 2000. p. 1-39.
9. Gemignani J. Best practices that boost productivity. *Bus Health* 1998; 16 (3): 37-42.
10. Milliman and Robertson Inc and Control Data Corporation. *Health Risks and Behavior: The Impact on Medical Costs*. Brookfield, WI: Report by Control Data Corporation; 1987.
11. Milliman and Robertson Inc and Chrysler Corporation. *Health Risks and Their Impact on Medical Costs*. Brookfield, WI: Report by Chrysler Corporation; 1995.
12. Chapman, L. Meta-Evaluation of Worksite Health Promotion Economic Return Studies: 2005 Update. *The Art of Health Promotion: Practical Information to Make Programs More Effective*, (an American Journal of Health Promotion publication). July/Aug 2009.
13. Partnership for Prevention (Fall 2001). *Healthy Workforce 2010: An Essential Health Promotion Sourcebook for Employers, Large and Small*. Available at: [http://www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/documents/Healthy\\_Workforce\\_2010.pdf](http://www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/documents/Healthy_Workforce_2010.pdf)