



DANNON INSTITUTE®

Nutrition for Health



WORKSITE WELLNESS PROGRAMMING IN SCHOOLS

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Worksite wellness programs provide valuable benefits to companies and large organizations willing to make a commitment to good health. Progressive companies put money into health and wellness programming in order to control health care costs, reduce absenteeism, improve morale and reduce employee turnover. The education system (including public and private K-12 schools as well as community colleges and universities) can take advantage of worksite wellness programming as a way to benefit employees (i.e., teaching and school staff), employers (the district), and students.

- **Refer to the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) benchmarks** (see box) to ensure that your program is consistent with the district's overall mission.
- **Give special consideration to create programs that promote both faculty and student health**, as schools have an inherent mission to serve students.
- **Encourage role modeling** -- Teachers and staff can serve as role models for students while students can bring energy and interest to the program and help to motivate teachers and staff to take wellness seriously.
- **Foster a healthy subculture** by building an overall healthy environment that benefits faculty, staff, and students.
- **Piggyback onto existing national health observances** as a great way to kick off a wellness program or to promote existing programming. The National Health Observances Toolkit (www.healthfinder.gov) offers information and ideas for health promotion activities throughout the year. For example, one particularly noteworthy observance is National Employee Health and Fitness Day (May 19th).
- **Explore corporate and online resources** on worksite wellness for guidance on planning and running of wellness programs, including wellness professionals who can carry out wellness programming and resources and kits that make it easier to run programming independently. However, these services and resources can be expensive
- **Seek out the many great resources that are available for no charge** from public health agencies and non-profit health organizations and foundations.
- **Use the following list as a starting point** to begin looking for effective resources on worksite wellness programs:

WELCOA's Seven Benchmarks of results-oriented workplace wellness programs include:

- Capturing CEO Support
- Creating a Cohesive Wellness Team
- Collecting Data to Drive Health Efforts
- Carefully Crafting an Operating Plan
- Choosing Appropriate Interventions
- Creating a Supportive Environment
- Carefully Evaluating Outcomes

Selected Worksite Wellness Resources

American on the Move – www.americaonthemove.org
CDC Healthier Workplace Initiative – www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/
Healthier U.S. Web Portal - www.healthierus.gov/
Health Enhancement Systems – www.hesonline.com
Mayo Clinic Health Solutions – www.mayoclinichealthsolutions.com
Wellness Council of America – www.welcoa.org
Wellsource – www.wellsource.com

Dr. Gregory Welk's research focuses on various aspects of physical activity and especially physical activity in youth. In addition to his position at Iowa State University, Dr. Welk also serves as the Scientific Director of the FITNESSGRAM youth fitness program. Developed by the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research, FITNESSGRAM is a fitness assessment and promotion program used in physical education programs across the United States.

Mr. Abramson is Superintendent of Schools for RSU #38 and a former YMCA CEO living and working in Maine.

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