



Supporting Behavioral Changes

the people

The City of Auburn is located in Central Maine and employs 260 people in a variety of positions, including office staff, manual laborers, and public safety officers. The City has had a Wellness Committee since 1995. The Wellness Committee works with the Maine Municipal Association's Employee Health Trust to offer educational programs and incentives to support employee health.

the need

With the rising costs of healthcare and the decline in physical activities of the general employment population, the City of Auburn wanted to support employees in leading healthy lifestyles.

the idea

To promote increased health awareness and support positive behavioral changes by supplying newsletters, offering incentive programs, and conducting educational programs.

the idea at work

The City of Auburn has had a very active Wellness Committee for a number of years and was interested in promoting behavioral changes on a larger scale. In the fall of 2001, the Committee added incentive prizes to an already existing incentive program. This included purchasing wellness magazines, such as *Prevention* or *Cooking Light*, for small prizes. The prizes generated higher participation rates and helped the Committee reach a greater number of employees.

Wellness newsletters have also been distributed to employees, informing and instructing them of the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle. The newsletters are provided quarterly. In addition, all departments get *Top Health*, a monthly newsletter providing current articles and summaries on health issues. A personalized *Fast Food Nutrition Guide* was also provided to all employees.

In the fall of 2002, a smoking cessation program was offered. Participants attended a class put on by the Health Trust (the City's health insurance program), and everyone who quit smoking had their name put in for a prize drawing if they remained smoke-free at six months and again at one year.

2.7 Healthy Lifestyle Success Stories

Supporting Behavioral Changes (continued)

The Wellness Committee meets monthly to discuss the needs and requests of employees. In addition to the meetings, a yearly evaluation is administered to all employees to get feedback on the Committee's activities.

the costs

The costs associated with the aforementioned initiatives are listed below:

- The *Top Health* newsletter: \$169 for the year
- Fast Food Guide*: \$316 for the year
- Smoking cessation: \$400 for the year
- Incentive prizes: \$500-\$1000 each year

the results

There has been an increase in the number of employees who participate in the incentive program. We now have 80 employees signed up, with about 65 employees participating on a regular basis. All 250 employees received the *Fast Food Nutrition Guide*, which was well-received. All departments posted the newsletters, making them available to everyone. Gina Klemenski, a City employee, says, "The newsletters build awareness, making you think of your health on a regular basis with everyday decisions you make."

contact(s)

Dorothy Meagher, Health & Social Service Department, 45 Spring Street,
Auburn, ME 04210, 207-786-2421 x207, dmeagher@ci.auburn.me.us