

Community Success Story:

Paving the Road to Better Health, Year 1

District Health Department #10

Summary

District Health Department #10 is working with 40 businesses within their jurisdiction to implement policy, system, and environmental level changes that support healthy lifestyles. The Lake County Road Commission is one local business that is participating in the project. Through the grant, the Lake County Road Commission was able to have support from District Health Department # 10 to implement worksite wellness programming.

Employees have received cancer prevention education and were challenged to walk 400 miles over the summer, tracked using pedometers provided through the grant. The Road Commission also received intensive worksite wellness training and funds for worksite wellness sustainability through the CDC work@health program. This funding will be used to purchase exercise equipment for staff, which may be made available to the community as well, since there are no fitness facilities in Lake County.

District Health Department #10 is pleased with the success at the Lake County Road Commission and continues to promote worksite wellness programs in the community.



The Lake County Road Commission Implemented Worksite Wellness Programming

Challenges

The Road Commission is a large employer for this very rural county. Lake County has very high poverty rates, exceeding almost every county in Michigan. Unemployment rates and other poverty indicators (e.g. students eligible for free/reduced price lunch, Medicaid paid births) are also very high. This puts residents at higher risk for negative health behaviors and outcomes. Encouraging wellness programs in the worksite is one way to improve the health status of employees and their families in this community.



Contact Information:
District Health Department #10
www.dhd10.org/

Solutions

The grant is providing resources for the Lake County Road Commission to successfully provide programming to their employees. The wellness leaders at this worksite are clerical staff that do not have background training in wellness, and worksite wellness is only a very small portion of what they do in their job. The Health Department was able to provide them with some best practice initiatives that were easy to implement and with encouragement for this new endeavor at the Road Commission. Through information and discussion about worksite wellness, they saw the benefits to their employees, understood that the Health Department staff would be a resource and support, and agreed to participate.

To provide for sustainability and continuing education for their staff, they were also selected to be trained in the CDC work@health program for employers. This provided a much appreciated but very intensive training in worksite wellness.

Results

The grant provided cancer prevention education to the employees as an addition to a group meeting with their insurance agent. This wellness presentation was also done near the start of their summer walking challenge, which provided another mechanism for health promotion. The Road Commission challenged their employees to walk 400 miles this summer and to use pedometers that were provided to them as part of this grant. A number of employees participated, although not as many as they would have liked. One problem encountered was that one employee did so well, it discouraged others from participating. Learning from their successes and challenges, they hope to offer another wellness challenge of some type in the future.

As part of the participation in the CDC work@health program, the Road Commission received funds to help sustain their wellness program. Since currently there are no fitness facilities located in Lake County they chose to purchase exercise equipment for their staff. They are working on purchasing equipment and finding a location for it. Realizing what a benefit this could be to the community, they are looking to work with other local worksites for a shared use agreement of this equipment.



400 MILE DASH!



Look Ahead

While the work is not done in this community, the future looks bright for inspiring other worksites to be involved. Often time and money can be a barrier and we hope to ease some of those burdens by providing resources to our local worksites. For a community with so few wellness resources, this is a great success. The hope is that the success of the Road Commission program will help give confidence to other worksites that they too can do worksite wellness. District Health Department #10 scheduled a recruitment drive and kickoff for new worksites in the fall to continue to build and sustain relationships with worksites in Lake County.

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