

West Virginia Makes Progress Towards Food Service Guidelines/Nutrition in Worksites

2.2 Implement Food Services Guidelines/ Nutrition Standards

I. Problem

Obesity remains a public health concern across the United States and in West Virginia. According to 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Report, 35.7% of West Virginia adults are obese. Furthermore, nearly half of West Virginia adults reported watching or reducing sodium/salt intake and, according to the 2013 BRFSS Report, approximately one-fourth (24.7%) were advised by a health care professional to do so. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans provides helpful nutrition and physical activity strategies for addressing obesity and nutrition. Implementing food service guidelines and nutrition standards in worksites is one effective strategy to improve adult nutrition and address obesity. This includes increasing the availability and variety of healthy beverages and foods including low sodium options in worksites.

"Partnering with the well@work WV program has enabled Active Southern West Virginia to reach more people to break down barriers to living a healthy lifestyle. The foundation of the CDC Health Scorecard provides structure and customized programs to a wide range of worksites."

- well@work participant

II. Intervention

The WV Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease (HPCD) recognized worksites as a critical setting for improving nutrition standards and addressing cross-cutting chronic disease risks related to poor nutrition and obesity. Specifically, HPCD set a goal of **increasing the number of worksites from three to 25 that have made progress towards the adoption of food service guidelines**, including sodium, in cafeterias, vending, and snack bars. Over a five-year period, HPCD received funds from the CDC to implement the adoption of food service guidelines that encourage healthier food and beverages in West Virginia. HPCD utilized CDC's Workplace Health framework to execute the following activities:

- **Engaged** key stakeholders and developed an action plan to assess, implement, and evaluate efforts to determine WV workplace wellness needs.
- **Partnered** with American Heart Association, Department of Education, Try This West Virginia, Kanawha Coalition for Community Health Improvement, and worksites to conduct CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard assessment in 84 worksites. This includes **surveillance and assessment activities** conducted synergistically with the **eight** WV Department of Education Regional Wellness Specialists under the framework of schools as worksites. These activities included implementing the CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard assessment in **52 of the 55 county school systems**.
- Leveraged **\$100,000+** through **Try This WV mini grant process over a 5-year period** to support workplace wellness and provide **workforce development, guidance, support and technical assistance** to worksites, including schools, where food and beverages are available. These activities included coordinating and facilitating **20** webinars, hosting meetings, calls, and workshops focused on nutrition guidelines.

- Promoted and implemented a **strategic communication strategy** to encourage sodium reduction leading to 2,209 unique views of the HPCD workplace wellness, health policy library, and sodium reduction page over the course of the grant.

III. Health Impact

HPCD successfully exceeded the five-year target by 100% - 56 worksites made progress towards adoption of food service guidelines. The number of employees who benefited from food service guidelines increased from **9,000** to **35,636** in worksites across WV. Collectively, this work led to the development of the well@work Healthy Worksite Resource webpage (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/hpcd/Pages/Well@WorkWV.aspx>) and HPCD Health Policy Library to include resources and examples of adopted guidelines to support worksites that include nutrition guidelines in cafeterias, vending machines, and snack bars. Establishing key partnerships with WV Chamber of Commerce, Workforce WV, WV Development Office, Public Employee Insurance Agency (PEIA), local health departments and health systems, university, local wellness programs, human resource society, and community organizations are critical to increase collaboration and impact health in WV. These partnerships are major contributors to the business and industry sector and have the knowledge, and ability to reach and impact a wide range of non-governmental and governmental employees across WV.

- Thirty worksites have written policies or formal communications that make healthier food and beverage choices available in cafeterias or snack bars.
- Thirty-one have a written policy for formal communication that makes healthier food and beverage choices available in vending machines.
- Thirty-six have a written policy or formal communication which makes healthier food and beverage choices available during meetings when food is served.