

WELLNESS **Bringing health to work** workplace

Improving the overall health of employees makes good business sense.

Studies overwhelmingly prove taking care of employees' physical and mental health helps reduce overall health-

care insurance costs, decreases employee turnover rates, increases productivity and improves employee morale.

For every dollar spent on wellness programs, a net savings of \$3.44 per employee was yielded, according to a survey by the Health Research Institute. A June 2002 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shows employers at worksites with physical activity programs have:

- reduced health care costs by 20 to 55 percent;
- reduced short-term sick leave by 6 to 32 percent; and
- increased productivity by up to 52 percent.

If your employer does not offer wellness services, take the initiative. You can start small – lobby for healthier food in the cafeteria, start a walking group over the lunch hour or ask your employer to bring in a wellness expert once a month for a lunch-and-learn session.

Businesses that opt to partner with an evidence-based health-care organization – like Mercy Medical Center – have access to trained

wellness staff members, implementation tools and performance monitoring techniques.

Many small-business owners think they can't afford health promotion programs; however, Mercy's Health2Work™ partners with more than 20 area businesses of all sizes to promote healthy employee lifestyle habits. Solutions are custom-tailored, based on budget and assessed needs.

Weight and lack of exercise rank in the top of employee health-risk factors, according to Nancy Dostal-Hoyt, Director of Mercy Corporate Wellness Services. Businesses can provide a leadership role in combating these risk factors – thereby reducing the risks of far more costly and debilitating chronic diseases such as diabetes. According to a University of Michigan study, the average employee has 2.2 health risks, doubling health-care costs and resulting in productivity losses of about \$2,000 per year.

Health-care reform begins locally with businesses playing a key role in contributing to the solution to our country's rising health-care costs. Two of the National Department of Public Health's Healthy People 2010 workplace objectives are to have:

- 75 percent of businesses offering a comprehensive employee health program; and
- 75 percent of individuals participating in employer-sponsored health promotion activities.

Mercy Medical Center enacted its Wellness Challenge program in 2005. The program rewards participating employees with a 20 percent discount on health insurance premiums, based on points accumulated through an annual health-risk appraisal (a Health2Work assessment), exercise, education and healthy choices in the company cafeteria. Participation rates for the Wellness Challenge have steadily increased over time, rising from 54 percent in 2006, to 64 percent in 2007 and 69 percent in 2008.

In 2008, employees not carrying Mercy's health insurance and all spouses who completed the Health2Work assessment received \$100.

All these numbers add up to healthier employees at home and at work.

Support your most valuable asset...

Did you know that more than 95 percent of health expenditures are committed to diagnosing and treating disease *after* it occurs?*

With Mercy Medical Center's Health2Work™ program, you can promote health and see measurable benefits for your employees and your bottom line.

Health2Work™ can help your company:

- Lower health-care expenditures
- Identify employee and company health needs
- Project costs of health care, absenteeism and turnover
- Customize wellness programs
- And much more.

Call 319-558-0311 for more information, or you may also visit www.Health2Work.com for a demonstration of the Health Risk Assessment.

There's *more* to The Mercy Touch.

MERCY
BUSINESS HEALTH SERVICES
* Source: Partnership for Prevention