

## Working Well

*Working Well* is a Texas AgriLife Extension Service partnership with Texas worksites to promote a healthy, productive workforce. The goal of *Working Well* is to provide businesses with technical support to design a customized wellness program that is sustainable and cost effective. As part of this worksite wellness package, AgriLife Extension assists employers with planning, implementing, and evaluating their individualized program.

### Relevance

- Promoting a healthy workforce is a cost-saving endeavor for employers who provide health insurance to more than 159 million Americans – 62.4 percent of the nonelderly population.
- Chronic diseases are responsible for 70 percent of health care costs.
- Similar to national statistics, seven of the ten leading causes of deaths in Texas are due to chronic diseases.
- Fifty percent of chronic diseases are due to poor lifestyle choices: tobacco use, physical inactivity, obesity, and an unhealthy diet.
- Modifying negative health behaviors can attenuate the rise in chronic disease prevalence.
- The workplace is an ideal setting to impact employees' lifestyles and behaviors because

most individuals generally spend over half of their waking hours on the job.

- Worksites offering chronic disease prevention and management programs can potentially reduce workers' health care costs.
- Other notable benefits of worksite wellness are increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, less accidents, and improved employee job satisfaction.
- While the benefits of workplace health promotion programs are well demonstrated, half of U.S. worksites with less than 750 employees offer a comprehensive health promotion program.

### Response

*Working Well* is AgriLife Extension's response to the need for health promotion programs in worksites, especially among small businesses. Multi-faceted in its approach, AgriLife Extension collaborates with worksites to design a *Working Well* program unique to its needs. From the needs assessment to the evaluation, AgriLife Extension supports the business along the continuum in the delivery of the worksite wellness program. Through this support, AgriLife Extension envisions *Working Well* to be a catalyst for healthy behavior change among Texas employees and, potentially, a strategy to lower employees' health care costs.

### Results

*Working Well* is in its pilot year. Multiple Texas counties are implementing this program. Evaluation evidence will be available early 2010.



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