

Addressing Obesity Prevention and Control in the Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Over one-third of adults in the United States (U.S.), over 72 million people, are obese. There are health and economic costs associated with obesity. In 2008, obesity-related medical costs were estimated to be as high as \$147 billion. **Methods:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend policy and environmental change strategies that address obesity in multiple settings: healthcare, schools, child care, worksites, and community. In 2011, about 111.5 million U.S. adults were full-time employees and most spend 8 to 10 hours per day at the workplace. Since an important determinant for obesity are the environments that support behaviors, work conditions may affect weight-related behaviors among employees. **Results:** This presentation provides examples of worksite strategies to address obesity including target behaviors such as decreasing consumption of high calorie foods, decreasing sugar drinks intake, increasing fruit and vegetable intake, increasing physical activity, and providing breastfeeding support. Specific strategies discussed will include workplace food concession and vending guidelines, providing access to portable drinking water; increasing access to fruits and vegetables through farm to institution programs and policies; creating or enhancing places for physical activity such as attractive stairwells, walking trails, and routes; and establishing and maintaining comprehensive, high-quality lactation support programs for employees. **Conclusions:** The worksite is a recommended setting in which to address obesity prevention and control.

KEY WORDS: Obesity, Adults, Worksites, Policy, Environment