

Program: WORKSITE WELLNESS

We NEED Healthy Workers!

Rockland Companies Agree: “Healthier Worksites, Means Healthier Workers!”

Rockland County, NY, January 2008—Four years ago, Rockland County’s Steps to a HealthierNY (Steps), developed an initiative called Healthier Worksites, Healthier Workers, to assist Rockland County worksites improve their employees’ health and wellness. Worksite wellness programs have been shown to reduce employee stress, health care costs, and absenteeism while increasing productivity, morale, and loyalty.

To support worksite health initiatives, the Steps program provides a trained health educator who conducts a one-hour introductory assessment and consultation to interested worksites. After this initial meeting, on-going consultation, services, and resources are provided to the sites to help worksites make sustainable policy or environmental changes that support access to physical activity, better nutrition, and/or reducing tobacco use and exposure. To support the efforts of the worksite, Steps can provide presentations on a variety of health topics, supply educational materials, and offer general guidance in program planning and implementation.

One workplace manager commented: “Apart from the health benefits, my staff seem to appreciate that we (the company) are also offering advice and support on something outside of the daily work routine.”

Steps has also encouraged worksites to adopt the “Healthy Meeting Guidelines”. These create a healthier meeting environment by serving a healthier snack including making water available and scheduling a brief physical activity break. To date, 57 sites affecting over 8,800 people have signed the Healthy Meeting Guidelines Challenge— and it is expected that many more will look to adopt these guidelines in the future.

Currently, funding is available through Worksite Wellness Mini-Awards to Rockland County worksites with over 100 employees. These mini-awards fund permanent, sustainable projects that increase access to physical activity, good nutrition, or reduce tobacco use and exposure. Healthier Worksites, Healthier Workers can only have a positive impact on the health of workers and ultimately families making Rockland a healthier community.

Worksites interested in starting wellness initiatives may contact the health department for a free one-hour consultation, start-up materials and additional information about sustaining worksite wellness programs.

For more information call the Rockland County Department of Health (DOH) at 845-364-2500 or visit the STEPS website at www.rocklandsteps.org