

State of Maine

Proposed Project – This proposal centers on the development and implementation of a worksite wellness program tailored to the needs of Maine’s small employers, piloting the program with DirigoChoice businesses. Worksite wellness programs for larger firms are well developed, but little is known about the needs, challenges and opportunities in developing and implementing worksite wellness programs in small firms. This project will provide information and tools for very small firms (an average of 3 employees/firm) in Maine. This project comprises several phases: development of a toolkit; recruitment; implementation; assessment; and the development and implementation of a recognition program. The following provides a summary of the project.

Development of toolkit

What:

- Development of a small business wellness toolkit, especially adapted for use in Maine’s very small firms (3 employees).
- Resources must include a range of options, including simple health risk appraisals, strategies to increase the use of preventive benefits, and tobacco control strategies.
- At a minimum, this project’s toolkit will include a comprehensive review of coverage available to employees under the DirigoChoice program, which will provide coverage to the pilot population.
- The final product of this work will be a resource kit compatible with the constraints presented by small business environments. While this kit will be tested in a pilot population that has relatively unique insurance coverage (see below), the kit will be adapted easily for use in any small business. The tool kit used for this effort will be made publicly available.

Implementation

What: Implement wellness initiatives in very small DirigoChoice firms (3 employees average)

- Target a total of 200 businesses for initial participation in the pilot project.
- Conduct five local meetings of DirigoChoice businesses to discuss the project and facilitate recruitment into the program.
- Send initial mailings regarding the pilot program and health and wellness in the workplace.
- Hold five local meetings of target firms in different areas of the state for peer-to-peer interaction and counseling.
- Enroll 50% (100) of the 200 targeted businesses. It should be noted that due to resource constraints, business participation may be limited to specific geographic areas.
- Businesses participating in the pilot program will receive
 - one-on-one support from project staff in implementing wellness initiatives in their worksites.
 - “connections” with local resources that can provide additional support, including local wellness council and the local Healthy Maine Partnership and/or Healthy Community Coalition. These latter entities play integral roles in the delivery of public health services in Maine, which does not otherwise have education, awareness, technical assistance, peer support and links to on-going resource development for employers to engage their employees in a systematic approach to long-term health behavior improvements.

Recognition Program

What: Develop standards, including Metrics, for a small business track of the Wellness Star

- Develop benchmarks and metrics for success. These standards will be developed independent of the MQF, which instead, will be responsible for measurement of business performance against those metrics and will make awards based upon that measurement.
- Convene a “summit” of interested parties to develop consensus around appropriate benchmarks for the recognition award.
- Hold 2 large group meetings around the development of metrics for the Wellness Star. This discussion – or series of discussions – will be facilitated by an independent party (TBA). Invitees will include members of each of the regional wellness councils, representatives of Healthy Maine Partnerships and Healthy Community Coalitions and the Maine Center for Disease Control (formerly the Maine Bureau of Health) and others.
- Develop Benchmarks and metrics. The metrics will be related to outcomes that demonstrate financial and/or behavioral returns on investment arising from improved employee health status, service use, and organizational change and learning.
- Explore the possibility of allowing modifications to community rating practices for small businesses that engage in wellness initiatives.

Assessment

- Collate data on the number of offers to participate, recruitment rates, subsequent drop out rates (with reasons for discontinuation of participation), call logs, personal contacts, etc.
- Measure changes in the use of the HealthyME benefit under DirigoChoice.
- Administer employee assessments to assess employee interests, self-reported health status, and company need and readiness for change at baseline. Post assessments will capture employee participation and satisfaction, measure changes in self-reported health status and assess the scope of new health related interventions.

Project Team –Trish Riley, Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Health Policy and Finance; Andy Spaulding ,Worksite Health Manager, Maine Cardiovascular Health Program and co-chair of the Maine Council for Worksite Wellness; Dean Paterson, co-chair of Southern Maine Worksite Wellness Council, principle of HealthCare Solutions; and senior consultant to the University of Southern Maine’s Lifeline Center for Wellness and Health Promotion; Karynlee Harrington, Executive Director, and Will Kilbreth, Dirigo Health Agency; Dennis Shubert, MD, PhD. and Chris McCarthy, Maine Quality Forum (also Dirigo Health Agency).

Total Cost: \$127,366 – *Of this total, \$35,042 (or 27.5%) is provided as an in-kind donation to the project. This is a “match rate” of almost \$0.38 in in-kind match for every \$1 in grant monies.*