



## Why Worksite Wellness?

For much of the week, most Vermonters spend more than one third of their day working. The programs, policies and environments at worksites significantly influence the health of employees and their families. Worksites can also have a positive impact on the health of the communities they are located in.

Worksite wellness strategies cover a wide range of topics, from reducing injury at the workplace to supporting emotional well-being. Worksites can also play an important role in helping to reduce chronic disease. Vermonters are more likely to die from chronic disease than all other causes of death combined.

### Worksite Wellness and the Bottom Line

Businesses also benefit financially from prioritizing worksite wellness. Lost productivity, absenteeism and direct medical expenses are costly for employers.

- Lost productivity due to absenteeism costs employers an estimated \$1,685 per employee (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)).
- Lost productivity costs due to poor presenteeism (where employees are at work but not able to perform fully because of sickness or stress) are even higher (Harvard Business Review).
- The cost of obesity for a company with 1,000 employees is estimated to be \$277,000 per year (CDC).
- Employed adults miss more than 164 million hours a year due to dental issues (Surgeon General).
- Direct health care costs attributable to six factors—body mass index (BMI), blood pressure, total cholesterol, blood glucose, tobacco use and alcohol use—account for an added \$623 per employee every year (Thomson Reuters Workforce Wellness Index).



WILLISTON CENTRAL SCHOOL, BIKE RACKS



## Five Steps to Worksite Wellness

### Worksite Wellness to Reduce Chronic Disease

It is easier to meet your own health goals when you have a supportive workplace. But competing priorities and limited resources can make it difficult for employers to know where to begin and how to make an impact. However, focusing on improving just three behaviors can reduce chronic disease and improve quality of life.

3-4-50 signifies **3 behaviors** – lack of physical activity, poor diet, and tobacco use – that lead to **4 chronic diseases** – cancer, heart disease and stroke, type 2 diabetes, and lung disease – that are the cause of more than **50 percent of all deaths** in Vermont. Together, businesses, schools, cities and towns, and health care providers can create and shape an environment that supports healthy options and makes them more accessible where Vermonters live, work, learn and play.

Worksites can take simple steps to support employee health and well-being. We invite you to become a 3-4-50 partner by implementing worksite wellness strategies that address chronic disease. Visit [healthvermont.gov/3-4-50/businesses](https://healthvermont.gov/3-4-50/businesses) to learn more and sign-on!

If you are just starting with implementing worksite wellness strategies, you can follow these five steps to establish a strong foundation for your worksite. The following pages will discuss each of these steps in more detail, provide tips on engaging and motivating employees, and provide the components of comprehensive worksite wellness.

#### Step 1: Form a Wellness Team

- Identify the individuals that will spearhead wellness programs and gain leadership support.
- Develop a vision and mission that will guide wellness programs.

#### Step 2: Assess Your Worksite

- Assess your worksite to identify any gaps in existing policies and programs.
- Assess the needs and interests of your employees.

#### Step 3: Identify Strategies

- Identify strategies from the Health Department's Six Core Outcomes for Healthy Worksites to implement over the next 6–12 months (see Section 2).
- Develop an implementation plan that includes:
  - A timeline
  - Specific goals and objectives
  - Methods of communicating the strategies to your employees

#### Step 4: Implement

- Implement your selected strategy or strategies.

#### Step 5: Evaluate

- Evaluate your program by assessing employee participation and satisfaction.