

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS AND
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
2009 REPORT OF SERVICES
La Crosse County Health Department



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Preface

The La Crosse County Employee Wellness and Occupational Health services are provided by a team from Health Education, Nutrition and Public Health Nursing Divisions with support from Clerical and Fiscal Divisions. The following is a description of those activities delivered by all the divisions jointly as well as those best provided by a specific Health Department division.

The Wellness and Occupational Health services provided to County employees and sometimes to others in their households have been evolving since the inception of this program about a decade ago.

“Worksite wellness programs are critical in removing common barriers to health care utilization and its early detection of chronic disease” – Healthy People 2010.

“Access to basic health care screenings in the workplace is an essential element to affordable health care now and in the future” – Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease – “Keeping America Healthy”; June 2008.

Programming Co-coordinated by Health Education, Public Health Nursing and Nutrition Divisions:

- **Employee Health and Fitness Week:**

- Poker Walk held at downtown campus in an effort to encourage walking among employees. Forty-four employees participated
- Body fat testing for 68 employees

- **Health Challenges**

- Conducted health challenges for 263 employees/family members who participated to encourage increased physical activity and healthy eating. Provided educational sessions, motivational e-mails and bonus activities.
 - National Park Challenge – 79 employees participated
 - Walktober Challenge – 184 employees participated

“On-site wellness programming done effectively can reduce your health insurance costs over time. Return on Investment (ROI) can be \$3 to \$6 for every dollar spent on wellness programs” (American Journal of Preventative Medicine, 2005).

- **Health Fairs**

- Health Fair delayed until March 2010. The County partnered with the City of La Crosse and the La Crosse School District to put on a large health and wellness fair at Western Technical College. A large HRA clinic was held at the Health and Human Services Building in place of the normal health fair.

- **HRA Screening Events**

- Provided health screening to 78 employees (lipid profile, blood sugar, blood pressure, pulse, body fat)
- HRA forms completed by employees, sent in for analysis, report sent to their homes
- We provided risk reduction counseling based on screening results

Health Education Division 2009 Employee Health Program

Tobacco Control Cessation

- Ten La Crosse County employees were provided nicotine replacement therapy (Over-the-counter medications) during 2009. Three out of the ten were spouses or adult family members. Two of the ten were still quit at the 6 month mark.

Joint Effort from Health Education, Nutrition Division and Public Health includes:

- **Health challenges**
 - National park challenge, 79 County Employee participated.
 - Walktober challenge, 138 employees participated.
- **HRA Screenings**

- May HRA screenings-23 employees participated
- December HRA screenings-55 employees participated

Nutrition Division

Since diet and physical inactivity contribute to 35% to 40% of healthcare costs (Dr. Aldana, 2007), an astounding \$5 million to \$6 million of La Crosse County employees' healthcare costs could be attributed to diet and physical inactivity. Increasing our programming to help improve diet and exercise habits of employees should help us improve the health and productivity of employees and reduce healthcare costs to La Crosse County.

Employers can see a return of \$3 to \$6 for every dollar spent over two to five years on workplace health programs. (American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 2005)

The average Return on Investment is around \$3 for every \$1 invested for a wellness program (Wellness Council of America, 2006)

As diet is directly related to the top three causes of death in the United States – heart disease, cancer and stroke – we work to promote dietary habits to help reduce the risks of these problems among employees. The following activities were provided in 2009 to help meet the health needs of La Crosse County employees.

- **HealthBits Newsletter**

- Wrote and distributed to all County employees twice a month via e-mail (sent to about 1,400 employees electronically). HealthBits is also posted and archived on Countyview for all employees to read.

- **Healthy Vending Choices**

- Continued as a participant in Stansfield Vending's Wellness Warrior's Program. Participation has greatly increased the selection of healthy vending choices available in the HHS vending machines.
- Sales of 500 Club selections (healthier choices) increased to 46% of sales in the HHS Building during the first 2 months of participation. Healthier food choices in vending machines and at meetings will improve the nutrition intake of employees while at work.

- **Healthy Weighs for a Lifetime**

- Fifteen employees participated in our new program including web-based lessons, individual RD consults and group sessions.

About 12% of healthcare costs are obesity related (Dr. Aldana, 2007).

This means that almost \$1.8 million is spent by La Crosse County on obesity related healthcare costs.

Helping employees to manage their weight could in turn help to reduce these healthcare costs.

- It costs \$1,200 more to treat an obese person than it does a person of healthy weight with the same condition. (Dr. Aldana, 2007).

- **Health Screening Risk Reduction Counseling**

- Provided counseling to 72 employees after they received cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure screenings to include ways to change diet and activity to help improve their results.
- Each \$1 spent on nutrition counseling can reduce the cost of medications for treating high cholesterol by over \$3. Over \$4,000 in medications can be saved in one year. (American Dietetic Association, 2000)
- We have had employees report they've been able to reduce or stop their medications after making dietary and activity changes we've discussed with them.

- **Educational Displays in Downtown Buildings**

- Lobby displays on nutrition topics in the months of March and September were seen by approximately 450 employees.
- **Educational Sessions**
 - Two sessions presented via TLC, viewed by a total of 518 employees
- **Individual contacts**
 - Responded to a variety of nutrition-related questions of 138 employees via e-mail, phone or in person:
- **Healthy Living for a Lifetime** –activities provided to the community which are promoted to and attended by County employees as well
 - **Educational sessions** presented at downtown campus over noon hour

Three sessions held in 2009, attended by 71 employees

 - March Hot Topics in Nutrition 21 employees attended
 - April Go Green 20 employees attended
 - May Cinco de Mayo/Healthy Mexican 30 employees attended
 - **Health Challenges** – promoting improved physical activity and nutrition intake.

Two challenges held in 2009 with 114 employees participating.

 - New Year, New You Challenge 43 employees participated
 - Fall 30 Challenge 71 employees participated

Public Health Nursing Division

New Employee Physicals

- All new County employees see the nurse for an employee physical. Physical includes body systems evaluation, immunizations, screenings, and health education. Employee physicals help the employers hiring practice. Hiring an employee that just simply can't physically handle a job position can cost hundreds to thousands of dollars in training expenses. La Crosse County saved approximately \$9,000 in 2009 by having physicals done on site compared to having the employee physicals done at a local clinic.

Health Screening Clinics

- Screening clinics include blood pressure, blood sugar, body fat, and blood cholesterol testing. Routine blood pressure and blood sugar clinics suspended in March of 2008 due to employee Pandemic Preparedness activities. Employees now come to the Health Department for blood pressure readings. "Catch disease at its earliest stages is the key in keeping medical care costs down and not to mention healthier employees are more productive and use less sick leave" (Healthy People 2000).

Health & Safety Education Classes/In-services

- Employee Health Nurse provides health related classes to County programs as requested on topics such as tuberculosis, MRSA, and first aid and safety.

Walk-in Service

- County employees can come to the Health Department with questions or for minor injuries for evaluation and treatment as needed. Employees also email or call with health related questions for the Employee Health Nurse on a regular basis (15-20/month).

Employee Immunizations

- Immunizations such as tetanus, hepatitis B and MMR are given on a regular basis to employees as needed or as requested. A disease outbreak could be devastating and expensive for any business or institution. Vaccinations can be given at a significant cost savings here at the Health Department compared to local clinics. Hepatitis B, MMR, and tetanus shots are billed approximately 50% more at

local clinics than compared with the Health Department. The cost savings to the County could be as high as \$8,000 annually.

Influenza Vaccination Clinics

- Flu shot clinics are held during the influenza season at various worksites in order to vaccinate as many employees as possible. The key when vaccinating employees against the flu is easy access and affordability of the flu vaccine. Influenza can cause temporary illness which keeps a person ill for 4-14 days or even death in some cases. Influenza causes other chronic illnesses to worsen and can lead to hospitalization in some cases costing thousands of dollars. An influenza case cited by Gregory Polland (Mayo Clinic 2004) cost over \$300,000 due to several hospitalizations over several months due to other chronic illnesses of a 47 year old female being worsened by influenza. This case of influenza may have been prevented if the individual would have had the flu shot.

Employee Health Education & Counseling

- Appointments are made by County employees to discuss their health concerns with the Employee Health Nurse. Health education and counseling often are not covered under insurance plans, so many individuals go without it. Employees can visit briefly with Nursing, Health Education, or Nutrition to better understand their condition and what they can do to improve their overall health.

Respiratory Protection Program

- The Employee Health Nurse coordinates this program for all County employees that are required to wear respiratory protection. Departments include Health, Human Services, Solid Waste, Sheriff's Department, and Juvenile Detention.
- Included in this program is respiratory protection education and Fit testing for respirators used. This practice is required by OSHA for anyone using respirators.

Bloodborne Pathogen Protection

- Nurse trains various County employees on bloodborne pathogen policies and good practice related to handling of blood and other potentially infectious materials.
- The Employee Health Nurse also is in charge of the County Bloodborne Pathogen Policy and updates that policy as needed.
- This training is required by law for those employees that have or can reasonably expect to have exposure to blood or body fluids.

Smoking Cessation Programming

- Coordination of the smoking cessation reimbursement program called "Commit to Quit." Modifiable risk factors like smoking have a huge impact on medical expenditures. Smoking is described as "the most important health risk in this country" (Sutter Health 2007). Approximately 60% of direct health care costs go directly to treating smoking related illnesses (Freedom from Smoking Centers, 2007).

Corporate Fitness Center Coordination

- Nurse coordinates with local fitness centers for County employee discounts at their facilities in order to make them more affordable for the average employee.

Health Fair Coordination

- Nurse works with the Health Education and Nutrition Divisions to coordinate health fairs for County employees approximately three times annually. No large health fair in 2009 due to it being moved to the following March. "Modifiable risk factors can be improved with workplace sponsored health promotion programs" (Healthy People 2010).

TB (Tuberculosis) Testing

- Nurse coordinates the planning and implementation for annual TB skin testing for those employees that need this testing as recommended by the CDC and other government agencies due to the high risk nature of their job duties.
- La Crosse County saved approximately \$4,000 in 2009 by having TB testing done on site.

Committee Work

- Nurse belongs to various committees working on “best practice” health care. Focusing on employee health issues. Committees include Employee Wellness, Immunization Coalition, and Emergency Preparedness.

Employee Health Newsletter

- Nurse develops periodic newsletter which focuses on different health topics. Newsletter is located on Countyview for all employees to read. Newsletter highlights health promotion and disease prevention activities.

Health Risk Appraisals (HRA’s)

- Health promotion/health education program intended for employees to discover their strengths and weaknesses in regards to their health related lifestyle practices. Clinical measurements are taken by the nurse and the employee fills out a health questionnaire. The results are compiled and sent to the employee.

Employee Health Challenges

- Health related challenges offered 2-3 times annually to County employees which focus on exercise and healthy eating. Nurse coordinates the health challenges with the Health Education and Nutrition Divisions. Challenges last 4-8 weeks on average. “On-site wellness programming done effectively can reduce your health insurance costs over time. Return on Investment (ROI) can be \$3 to \$6 for every dollar spent on wellness programs” (American Journal of Preventative Medicine, 2005).

Pandemic Preparedness

- Nurse took part in starting a committee which included area leaders in government, schools, law enforcement, business, healthcare, and other key La Crosse County employees. This committee started in February of 2008 and continued into 2009 to work on a pandemic plan for La Crosse County. This pandemic plan will help La Crosse County respond for the next pandemic incident when (not if) it happens. This was a mandated activity handed down by the State of Wisconsin for all Wisconsin Counties to have a written plan in place by 2009.

Pandemic (H1N1) Response

- Nurse in charge of setting up all employee H1N1 vaccination clinics as well as vaccinating most employees. Nurse also took part in several educational presentations to County staff and the public related to the H1N1 pandemic. Nurse also played a role for the public response as the Operations Section Chief for the County pandemic response. Nurse helped set up and run community vaccination clinics in which County employees and the public participated in.

Employee Health Policy & Procedures

- Nurse is responsible to write and update current policy and procedure as it relates to employee health services. Several policies and procedures were rewritten or updated in 2009.

Nursing Services Statistics – 2009

New employee physicals	196
Health Screenings	205
Walk-in Services	172
Phone/Email Services	180/240 (15-20/Month)
Employee Immunizations	668
Trainings (In-service Participants)	232
Smoking Cessation	5
Respiratory Protection/Fit Tests	24
Annual TB Tests	328
Annual TB Readings	316
County Wellness Newsletter	1300

Employee Wellness Services Summary

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Health Education Division					
Pedometer Rental	97	44	-	-	-
Tobacco Cessation Class Members	7	7	5	10	10
Nutrition Division					
Educational Displays – 2 Different Types	450	450	450	450	450
Health Bits Newsletter - Biweekly	830	840	1,400	1,400	1,400
Healthy Weighs	27	20	10	-	-
Individual Consults	-	-	44	46	138
Environmental Assessment	-	1	-	1	-
Health Habits/Interest Survey	-	158	-	-	-
Fruit & Vegetable Challenge	41	16	-	23	-
Healthy Living Sessions – Number	-	5	5	6	3
		7	92	166	71
Employees					
Healthy Living Challenges – Number	2	-	2	3	2
	67		86	212	114
Employees					
Vending Choices: Percent of HHS vending sales that are 500 Club (healthier choices)				46%	
Public Health Nursing Division					
Adult Health Screening	353	344	442	240	205
Annual TB Screening	-	301	219	255	644
Training/In-service Participants	250	250	402	328	232
County News Letter 4/yr	1,300	1,400	1,400	1,400	0
County Wellness Newsletter	-	-	1,400	1,400	1,400
Immunizations	416	578	621	563	668
New Employee Physicals	162	184	219	283	196
Respiratory Protection/FIT Test	100	120	48	65	24
Walk-ins	176	189	181	220	172
Smoking Cessation	-	-	8	4	5
Phone/Email Services	-	-	-	-	180/240
Joint Efforts					
*** Note no health fair in fall of 2009 as changing to spring fair in 2010, collaborating with City and School District of La Crosse					
Health Fairs: Number	2	2	3	4	0
Participants	80	111	191	223	-

Health Challenges: Number	2	2	2	1	2
Participants	310	128	132	90	263
Education Sessions: Number	-	-	5	4	1
Participants	70	85	90	106	30
Physical Activity Event: Number	-	-	-	1	1
Participants	-	-	-	51	44
Body Fat Testing	-	-	-	16	68
HRA Screening	-	-	-	87	71
HRA Risk Reduction Education	-	-	-	56	72

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BUDGET vs. ACTUAL 2009

<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual</u>
PH Immunization	13,200	10,655
PH Screening	2,350	0
Cash Contributions	0	100
Health Insurance Fund Transfers	139,544	139,544
General Fund Transfers	155,094	0
Total Revenues		150,299
<u>Expenses</u>		
Health Education Division	9,300	10,725
Laboratory Division	700	0
Administration Division	0	1,031
PH Nursing Division	256,682	105,616
Nutrition Division	11,091	10,383
Total Expenses	277,773	127,755

La Crosse County Employee Wellness Committee Committee Charge 2010-2011

GOAL: To promote the highest level of health status for La Crosse County Employees.

MISSION: Plan and promote employee and family wellness services that enable employees to have optimal health.

MEMBERS: Personnel Department Director, Health Department Education Division Manager, Health Department Nutrition Division Manager, Health Department Public Health Nursing Manager, La Crosse County Occupational Health RN, Health Department Director and other staff as identified by the previously listed personnel

ACTION PLAN: To implement the goal and mission, the Committee will focus on the following high priority activities:

- Weight Control
- Health education programming, classes, materials, etc.
- Health assessments and routine health screening for high priority problems
- Smoking control
- Employee challenges'/newsletter
- Nutrition education
- Environmental exposures in the work site
- Risk Reduction Counseling
- Occupational health as part of new employee orientation
- Consider becoming an award level participant in the Wellness Councils of America
- Provide input to County Health insurance planning
- Identify incentives for employees to complete a personal health assessment
- Create a five year plan with County Wellness Goals
- Establish a County Policy document for use of Personal Protection Equipment and Supplies
- Establish and implement the AED Policy for equipment maintenance and staff training

RESOURCES: The resources necessary to implement the tasks of the Committee will come in part from the contract with the La Crosse County Personnel Department, student intern support, Health Department staff

time, grants or contacts from non-La-Crosse County sources, health insurance or other sources yet to be determined.

MEETING FREQUENCY: It is anticipated that the group would meet monthly or as often as necessary to accomplish the Committee Charge.

LEADERSHIP: In January of each year the Committee will elect the chair who will do minutes and agenda.

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