November 2011

Re: Invitation to Focus Group: Worksite Wellness Programs

Greetings!

Northeast Business Group on Health (NEBGH) and the American Diabetes Association (ADA) are teaming up to create a Worksite Wellness Center. We would like to hear your perspective on worksite wellness programs for small to mid-size organizations such as your own (2 to 500 employees). We are requesting your participation in a focus group that will be held on November 30, 2011 from 2:00pm – 4:00 pm at CBS, 51 West 52nd Street, 19th Floor. The focus group will be run by a public health researcher from Harvard, Dr. Jeremy Nobel. Our hope is that this opportunity would facilitate a better understanding of what your needs are, what your company may already offer employees, what challenges you face and what would help you lower your health care spending and increase productivity. For your time and effort, we will provide a $100 honorarium.

NEBGH and ADA have been awarded a grant from the NY State Health Foundation to work together to develop a worksite wellness center that would provide affordable programs and resources to small and mid-size companies for nominal cost. Unfortunately, many of these employers have little or no access to wellness programs that target their unique business environment, concerns and population.

Outreach to you is one of our activities to ensure programs that are developed fit your needs. Attached are some impact statements about chronic conditions that you may find interesting.

Again, we would be excited to have the opportunity to hear your perspective on November 30, 2011 at 2:00 pm. Please RSVP by November 28, 2011 to Adria Subbiondo; adria@nebgh.org or 212-252-7440, ex. 223.

Gratefully,

Laurel Pickering, MPH
President and CEO
Northeast Business Group on Health

Travis Heider
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Facts about Chronic Diseases

These facts are to inform you how costly chronic diseases may be to your organization and how costly they are to New York State. They enforce how imperative wellness programs are to prevent or minimize the impact of chronic diseases.

1. Evidence shows that chronic diseases are largely preventable by modifying behavior and creating healthy environments.

2. A study sponsored by the Health Enhancement and Research Organization identified ten modifiable health risk factors which accounted for 25% of all health care costs.

3. A meta-analysis of studies on the impact of workplace wellness programs found that medical costs go down by $3.27, and absenteeism costs by $2.73, for every dollar spent on wellness programs (Baicker et al., 2010).

4. A 2007 study estimated the total cost of chronic conditions in New York State—which includes the cost of treatment as well as lost workdays and decreased employee productivity—to be $88 billion in 2003 (Milken Institute, 2007).

5. Chronic diseases, which include heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes, are responsible for seven in ten deaths in New York State (Milken Institute, 2007).

6. In 2007, nearly 60,000 New Yorkers died of cardiovascular disease, accounting for 41% of all deaths in the state (NYSDOH). Cardiovascular disease shares many risk factors with other chronic conditions, including obesity, poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, high blood pressure and cholesterol, and tobacco use.

7. Having diabetes increases the risk of death twofold.

8. In a study conducted from 2005-2008, based on hemoglobin A1C levels, 35 percent of US adults ages 20 years or older, and 50 % of adults ages 65 years or older had pre-diabetes.


10. People with diagnosed diabetes incur average medical expenditures of $11,744 per year. In 2007, 1 out of every 5 health care dollars was spent caring for someone with diagnosed diabetes. Indirect costs include increased absenteeism ($2.6 billion) and reduced productivity while at work ($20 billion).