

Information for Action # 2013-7

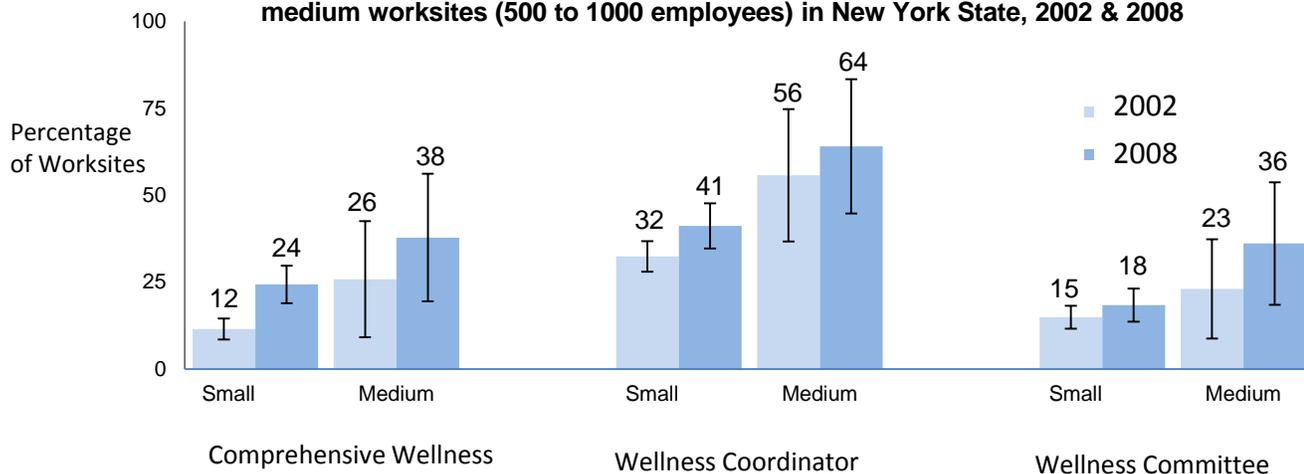
Smaller worksites (with fewer than 500 employees) remain the priority for worksite wellness promotion in New York State.

Worksite wellness programs have been demonstrated to reduce employee health risks¹ and generate savings.² Several worksite programs are recommended in the Guide to Community Preventive Services as a means to reduce risk factors for chronic disease (e.g., promoting physical activity, decreasing tobacco use).³ Worksites that have a wellness committee or coordinator are better able to establish and sustain supports for worksite wellness.⁴

New York State (NYS) has approximately 580,000 worksites that employ more than 8,400,000 workers. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of these worksites employ fewer than 500 people. Worksites with fewer than 500 workers employ nearly 80% of the private sector workforce. The New York State Department of Health has focused its worksite health promotion programs on employers with fewer than 500 employees.

- Small worksites (75-499 employees) are less likely than medium-sized (500-1,000 employees) worksites to have a wellness coordinator, a wellness committee, or a comprehensive wellness program, defined as having at least one worksite wellness support in each of six wellness categories⁵ (see Figure 1).
- Between 2002 and 2008, both small (75-499 workers) and medium-sized (500-1,000 workers) worksites showed an increase in three measures of worksite wellness. However, in 2008 only 24% of small and 38% of medium-sized worksites offered comprehensive worksite wellness to employees (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Worksite wellness supports among small (75 to 499 employees) and medium worksites (500 to 1000 employees) in New York State, 2002 & 2008



Data Source: NYSDOH Healthy Heart Program Statewide Survey of Worksites, 2002 and 2008.

PUBLIC HEALTH OPPORTUNITY

Assisting small worksites in offering quality worksite wellness programs can improve the health status of the workforce and help reduce health costs.

Contact:

For more information about the data included and their specific implications for action, please send an email to DCDIPIFA@health.state.ny.us with IFA # 2013-7 in the subject line.

References:

- ¹ Loeppke et al. Health and productivity as a business strategy: a multi-employer study. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. 2009; 51:114-119.
- ² Baiker K, Cutler D, Song Z. Workplace wellness programs can generate savings. *Health Affairs* 2010; 29(2): 1-8.
- ³ Guide to Community Preventive Services. Worksite health promotion. www.thecommunityguide.org/worksite/index.html. Accessed 07/31/2012.
- ⁴ Linnan et al. Results of the 2004 national worksite health promotion survey. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2008; 98:1503-1509.
- ⁵ Six wellness categories were general wellness (e.g., wellness committee), healthy eating (e.g., healthy food policy for vending machines), physical activity (e.g., access to clean and safe stairwells), tobacco use practices, stress management, and preventive health screenings.

