

# PROMOTING HEART HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE



**HEART DISEASE IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN.** Over 600,00 Americans die from heart disease each year—that's 1 in every 4 deaths. Heart disease costs the United States approximately \$300 billion each year. This total includes the cost of health care services, medications, and lost productivity.

High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking are key heart disease risk factors for heart disease. About half of Americans (49%) have at least one of these three risk factors.

Several other medical conditions and lifestyle choices can also put people at a higher risk for heart disease, including: Diabetes, Overweight and obesity, Poor diet, Physical inactivity, and Excessive alcohol use.

**EMPLOYERS CAN PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN HELPING** individuals improve their cardiovascular health by creating worksites that support good nutrition, physical activity, and preventative health measures.

The purpose of this document is to provide a selection of concrete action steps that employers can take at their worksites to help individuals improve cardiovascular health.

## NUTRITION

### **Provide healthier foods and beverages**

Make most (more than 50%) of food and beverage choices available in vending machines, cafeterias, snack bars, or other purchase points be healthier food items.

**Create a healthy nutrition policy** for all meetings or company events that include served meals.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### **Provide environmental supports for recreation or physical activity**

(e.g., onsite exercise facility, subsidized or discounted onsite or offsite exercise facilities, walking trails, bicycle racks).

### **Provide organized individual or group physical activity programs**

for employees (e.g., walking or stretching programs, group exercise, or weight training).

## TOBACCO CONTROL

**Provide health insurance coverage with no or low out-of-pocket costs** for prescription tobacco cessation medications, including nicotine replacement.

**Develop a written policy** designating your workplace as a tobacco free site.

## HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE & STRESS MANAGEMENT

**Provide health insurance coverage with no or low out-of-pocket costs** for cholesterol/lipid control medications, blood pressure control medications, or for home blood pressure monitoring devices.

**Provide one-on-one or group lifestyle counseling and follow-up monitoring** for employees with high blood pressure, prehypertension, or high cholesterol.

