

Worksite Health Promotion Policies and Practices: 2014 Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey Results

Over the past two decades, worksites have become important settings for health promotion programs and interventions. Worksites provide unique opportunities for public health activities because the majority of U.S. adults spend 50 percent or more of their waking hours at work.¹ Healthcare costs for people with chronic diseases account for 75% of total healthcare costs in the nation. As most employers share the burden of healthcare costs, keeping workers healthy and free from diseases and risk factors should be a major concern and goal. In addition to lowering healthcare costs, having a healthy workforce increases productivity and reduces absenteeism.

Worksites provide an opportune setting to tackle these challenges by modifying or creating policies and environments that support healthy behaviors.² One of the goals for Healthy People 2020 is to increase the proportion of worksites that offer an employee health promotion program to their employees.³ The following is a summary of results from the 2014 Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey, administered using SurveyMonkey® as the survey tool, to members of the *EmployersLikeME** organization. *EmployersLikeME* is an organization of Georgia employers who share and learn from each other about providing better health care for employees at better costs. The survey was completed by 49 employers, each representing a worksite.

Key Results

- Approximately 45% of survey respondents were from worksites with 250 or more employees, while 35% had 100-249 employees, and 15% had 15-99 employees
- The majority of worksites were from the manufacturing industry (Table 1)

Screenings, Disease, and Stress Management

- During the past 12 months, about 88% of worksites offered at least one health screening for employees
- Screenings for high blood pressure were the most common (Figure 1)

Table 1. Percent of Worksites by Industry, Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey, 2014 (n = 49)

Industry	Percent
Manufacturing	47%
Other	18%
Educational Services, Health Care, or Social Assistance	10%
Retail or Wholesale Trade, Finance, Insurance, or Real Estate	10%
Services & Utilities, Transportation, Warehousing, Information or Communications	8%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, or Management	6%
Arts and Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, or Food Services	4%
Construction, Agriculture, Mining, Forestry, or Fishing	0%



Worksite Health Promotion Policies and Practices

- About 82% of worksites offered flu shots during the past 12 months
- Health risk assessments or questionnaires about health habits were offered in 67% of worksites
- About 86% of worksites offered at least one disease management or education program, which includes heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and mental health programs
- The most common education classes offered were about weight management, nutrition/healthy eating, and physical activity (Figure 2)
- About 37% of worksites offered stress management education or activities

Tobacco Policies

- About 47% of worksites have a formal written policy that prohibits smoking in all company buildings, (Figure 3)
- More than half of worksites (59%) restrict smoking to designated smoking areas outside the building
- About 6% of worksites restrict smoking to designated smoking areas within the building
- Approximately 41% of worksites have a policy that restricts smoking in all company or agency vehicles

Figure 1. Health Screenings Offered by Worksites, Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey, 2014 (n = 49)

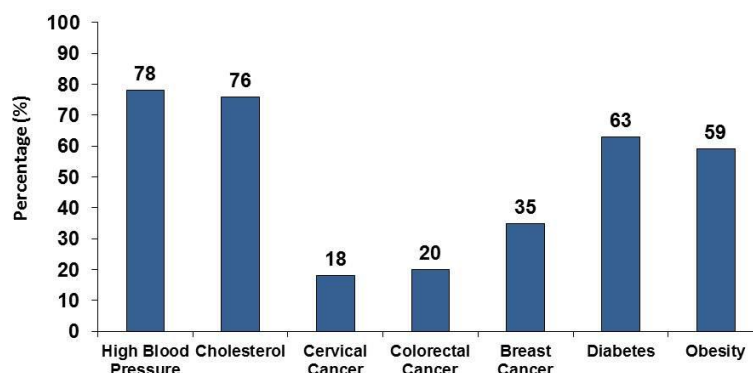


Figure 2. Health Education Classes or Programs Offered by Worksites, Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey, 2014 (n = 49)

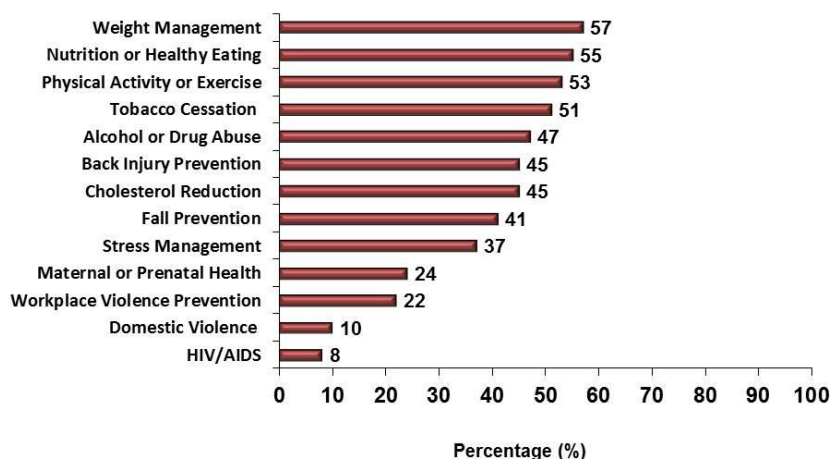
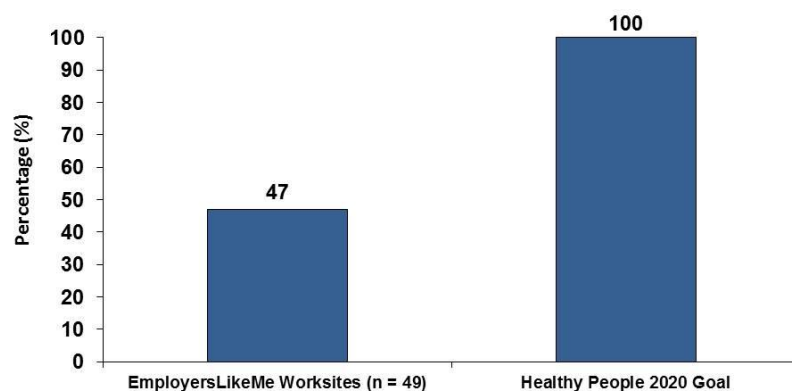


Figure 3. Percent of Worksites with Formal Indoor Smoking Policy vs Healthy People 2020 Goal, Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey, 2014 (n = 49)



Worksite Health Promotion Policies and Practices

Company Mission to Improve Employee Health

- About 33% of the worksites have employee health improvement as a stated mission for the company (Figure 4)
- About 8% of the worksites have policies allowing time in addition to normal breaks for employees to participate in physical activity during the workday
- Almost 11% of the worksites allowed flextime for participation in physical activities or special breaks in the workday for physical activity
- About 23% permitted breastfeeding women to take time during working hours to express or pump breast milk
- Forty-three percent of the worksites have an onsite health clinic
- Approximately 4% of the worksites that do not have an onsite health clinic have a mobile health unit that regularly visits the worksite

Environments Supporting Healthy Food Availability

- Only 13% of worksites had a formal written policy for making healthy food choices available in the cafeteria, vending machines, or at company meetings and events (Figure 5)
- About 27% of worksites have cafeterias, which can provide possible venues for promoting healthy eating
- About 42% of worksites with a cafeteria promote or offer discounts on healthy food choices
- The majority of worksites (about 94%) had vending machines, which can provide opportunities to supply and promote bottled water and healthier snacks instead of soda and candy
- All of the worksites (100%) had a place to refrigerate, freeze, and heat food, which allows employees to bring healthier alternatives to fast foods

Figure 4. Percent of Worksites Having Employee Health Improvement As Part of Company Mission, Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey, 2014 (n = 48)

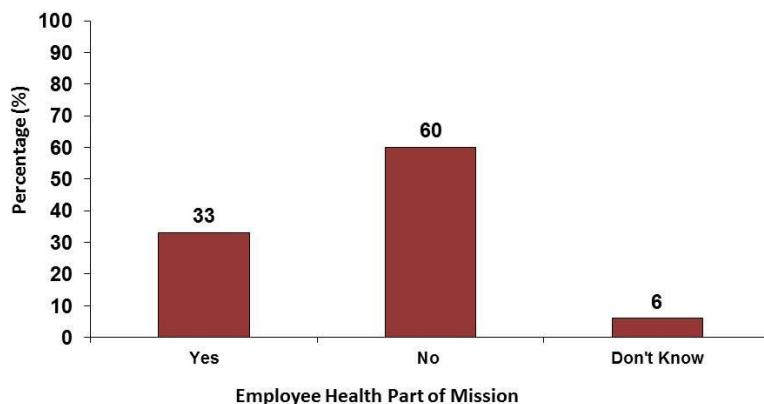
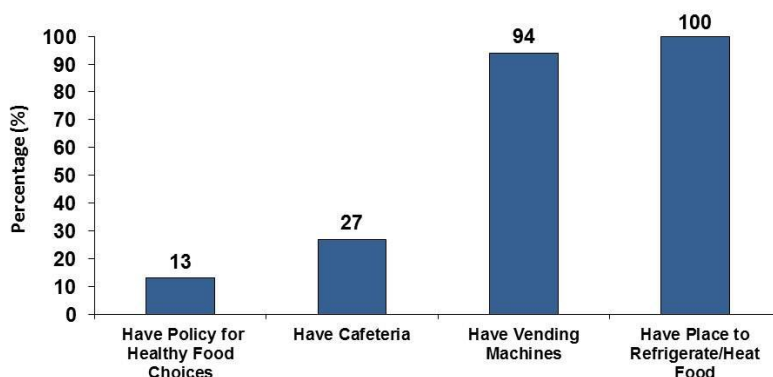


Figure 5. Worksite Environments Supporting Healthy Food Availability, Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey, 2014 (n = 48)



Barriers to Implementation/Success of a Wellness Program

- Lack of employee interest and lack of participation by high-risk employees were the primary barriers or challenges to the implementation and success of worksite health promotion programs (Figure 6)
- Having inadequate resources was noted to be a barrier to implementation of a worksite health promotion program for only about 37% of the worksites
- The majority of worksites expressed interest in having educational classes or distributing materials on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke to (Table 2)

Figure 6. Barriers to Implementation or Success of Worksite Health Promotion Programs, Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey, 2014 (n = 45)



Table 2. Educational Classes or Materials of Interest to Worksites, Georgia Worksite Wellness Pilot Survey, 2014 (n = 40)

Educational Class or Material	Percent
Educational class recognizing the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke	67%
Educational class on cancer prevention and control	62%
Diabetes educational materials	60%
Chronic disease self-management class	59%
Falls prevention educational materials	47%
Educational class on the proper use of AEDs	46%
Motor vehicle safety educational materials	45%
Educational materials for lactating mothers	36%

Recommendations for Promoting a Healthy Work Environment and Workforce

- Create a worksite wellness committee and a company mission to improve employee health
- Access the *Work Healthy Georgia* toolkit** to help initiate or advance a worksite wellness program
- Provide subsidized or reduced fees for health memberships and flexible schedules for physical activity
- Implement or expand coverage of tobacco policy to prohibit smoking anywhere at worksite.
- Provide appropriate disease management programs on topics such as hypertension and diabetes
- Maintain automated external defibrillators (AED) onsite and provide appropriate AED and CPR training

*More information about *EmployersLikeMe* can be found at: <http://employerslikeme.org/>

**Access the *Work Healthy Georgia* Toolkit at: <http://dph.georgia.gov/worksite-wellness-tools-and-resources>

References:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2014 Aug 27). Occupational Safety and Health—Healthy People 2020.
2. Choi HS, Bricker SK, Troy K, Kanny D, Powell KE. Worksite Health Promotion Policies and Practices in Georgia: 2002 Georgia Worksite Survey. Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health, January 2004. Publication Number DPH03/156HW.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2014 Aug 27). Educational and Community-Based Programs—Healthy People 2020.