

Grand Traverse County Wellness Policy

Rationale

On average, Americans working full-time spend more than one-third of their day, five days per week at the workplace. The use of effective workplace programs and policies can reduce health risks and improve the quality of life for American workers. Comprehensive worksite wellness policies can have long-term impacts on the health of employees and the community. At the same time, these initiatives can also reduce health care costs, increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, support presentism, attract talent, and improve employee morale.

Investing in employees was 1 of 4 recommendations made by the Grand Traverse County Interim Management Team to the Board of Commissioners in May 2018. Supporting efforts aimed at enhancing employee well-being and morale were cited as reasons associated with the recommendation to develop a wellness initiative.

This Wellness Policy identifies key areas of focus for employee health. These areas are supportive of findings from a May 2018 worksite health assessment referred to as “Designing Healthy Environments at Work” or DHEW. The DHEW assessment was completed by a team of County employees and facilitated by Michigan State University Extension. This evidence-based tool assesses 1) how well current worksite infrastructure and policies support employee health and 2) the degree to which worksite environment, culture, and offerings are conducive to increasing physical activity, healthy eating, and tobacco free lifestyles. The May assessment revealed several opportunities for growth by Grand Traverse County as it relates to supporting worksite wellness. In addition to this feedback, the County’s current Wellness Team opted in June to invite County employees to complete a 10-question employee interest survey, a component of the DHEW. With a response rate of 35%, the survey helped provide insight as to current employee interests and needs.

COUNTY WELLNESS GOALS:

The County, through this Wellness Policy, seeks to:

- Be a role model for other employers located in Grand Traverse County and other counties by providing a supportive work environment, organizational practices, culture, and a spirit of collaboration
- Provide access to healthy food and beverages for employees during the work day and to make the healthy choice the easy choice;
- Encourage employees to take advantage of opportunities for physical activity before, during or after the workday;
- Eliminate workplace tobacco exposure and encourage a tobacco-free lifestyle;
- Encourage employees to take good care of their health and to use the medical care system wisely;
- Utilize County owned or leased facilities and grounds in a manner that supports healthy lifestyle choices;
- Engage employees as partners in assuring their best possible health and in reducing preventable health care costs for both our employees and the County.

- Maintain a healthier workforce as a way to lower direct costs such as insurance premiums and worker compensation claims.

KEY FOCUS AREAS:

The County Wellness Policy addresses seven key areas:

1. Organizational Commitment
2. Food & Nutrition
3. Physical Activity
4. Tobacco-Free Lifestyle
5. Mental Well-Being (Work-Life Balance & Stress Management, Behavioral Health)
6. Employee Engagement, Education & Training
7. Physical Work Environment

1. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT:

Dedicated Program and Resources.

- The County will establish an Employee Wellness Program to support implementation and support for items identified in this policy. The Human Resources Department, working in conjunction with a Wellness Committee, will be responsible for the implementation of this policy and establishing a wellness program.
- The County will establish a County Wellness Committee composed of at least 4-8 County employees from different departments. The committee will meet at least quarterly with the goal of advancing goals within the Wellness Policy. In partnership with the Human Resources Department, the Wellness Committee will play an active role in supporting and implementing the Wellness Policy. The committee will actively support a culture of health within the worksite through garnering management support, planning and implementing health promotion programming, and serving as worksite wellness champions/models.
- As appropriate, the Wellness Committee and Human Resources will collaborate with County departments, programs or services, and other organizations outside of County government that promote healthy lifestyles.
- The County will take into account employee wellness when considering potential modifications to existing County buildings.
- The County Board of Commissioners, as part of their annual budget review process, shall consider allocating sufficient funds to establish and maintain a Wellness Program.

Periodic Review of Benefits Design

- Human Resources will periodically conduct a review of benefits to assure that benefit design is consistent with generally established practice(s) and will aim to reflect the most current “best practice” industry recommendations and guidelines, with regards to quality of care. This includes but is not limited to preventive care benefits, chronic disease management programs, nutrition counseling, weight management, physical activity/fitness, smoking cessation, stress management, behavior health and substance use benefits.

2. FOOD & NUTRITION:

Establish Nutrition Standards

- The County will aim to ensure food and beverages sold or provided through the County are in alignment with recommendations in the the most current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Further details are listed in the County's Food & Nutrition Standards attached as Exhibit A.

Vending Machines

- Pre-packaged food and beverages will adhere to the County's Nutrition Standards.
- Point of purchase nutrition information will be posted at vending machines.

Meetings, Trainings, Conferences, Community Meetings (Department/County sponsored or funded)

- Food, snacks, or beverages provided shall adhere to the County's Nutrition Standards.
- In situations where the county is partnering with other agencies and organizations in sponsoring conferences, public meetings or community events, appropriate County representative(s) will make efforts to inform these partners of the County's Nutrition Standards to ensure these guidelines are considered when selecting food and beverages for event(s).

County-sponsored or County-supported Events and Fundraisers (Food Truck Events, Charitable Contributions Campaign, etc)

- Organizers of events and fundraisers are encouraged to offer healthy food options when such events are conducted on County property or are sponsored by the County off-site.

Employee Food

- The County's Wellness Policy does not impact employee "brown bag" meals, snacks, or food brought in to share with others.
- Employees are encouraged to bring healthier option(s), such as fruits, vegetables, or water, when bringing food to work to share (e.g., potlucks or other food-centered activities).

3. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

Work Breaks for Physical Activity/Flexible Work Schedule

- Employees are encouraged to use lunch breaks and daily breaks to be physically active. Employees are encouraged to seek opportunities to be more physically active during the course of their workday (e.g., park further from the building, walking meetings, taking stairs instead of the elevator, work stretches, etc.). Employees are encouraged to seek alternative commuting (biking, walking and public transportation).

- Supervisors are encouraged to consider requests for flexible work schedules for employees who want to be physically active during the workday consistent with any subsequent [County flex-work/flex-time policies](#), and departmental operational needs.

Movement Breaks at Meetings

- It is recommended that meetings/trainings/conferences lasting more than one hour include moving / stretching breaks in the agenda.

Departmental Injury Prevention Programs

- Departments are encouraged to establish an injury prevention program, work with the insurance carrier and the Safety Team as well as comply with the existing Safety Policy. The County will consider establishing pre-work stretching programs and/or other department physical activity program(s) to improve physical health and reduce injuries. Departments may consider sponsoring such programs provided that there are specific program guidelines in place.

4. TOBACCO-FREE LIFESTYLE:

Supporting a tobacco-free lifestyle

- Employees and/or family members who smoke are encouraged to consider quitting smoking and are supported in their endeavors to do so.

Eliminating workplace tobacco exposure

- The County will acknowledge Section 4: Smoking within the Safety Policy and may choose to work periodically to recommend strengthening existing policy.

5. MENTAL WELL BEING (Work-Life Balance & Stress Management / Behavioral Health):

Work-Life Balance

- Supervisors are encouraged to consider flexible work arrangements consistent with departmental operational needs.
- The County will continue to sponsor an Employee Assistance Program for employees for individual counseling and services on a variety of work-life matters. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of trainings, programs, and other offerings through the Employee Assistance Program.

6. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION & TRAINING:

Wellness Training and Education

- The County will establish a Wellness Training target of no less than four hours each fiscal year for participation in County-sponsored classroom and/or online training.
- Employees are encouraged to take advantage of health trainings, programs and activities through the Employee Wellness Program (e.g., onsite and web-based training,

workshops, health screenings, health activities, etc.), programs available through the County's health care plan provider, and/or Employee Assistance Program.

- The County will promote employee benefits and programs that give employees critical health-improvement knowledge and skills that contribute to their best possible health and well-being as well as work-life education and skills to be able to effectively manage the demands of work and personal life. These will include but are not limited to:
 - nutrition and weight management programs
 - physical activity programs that promote cardiovascular health, muscular strengthening and/or stretching & flexibility
 - smoking cessation education, resources, and referral
 - behavior health and substance use education and programs, especially those that impact health and productivity (e.g., substance use, depression, anxiety)
- The County supports management/supervisor training opportunities regarding strategies and techniques that foster a supportive work environment and contribute to a healthy and engaged workforce.
- The County will sponsor health improvement and career development training programs that focus on building personal and professional skills for effectively managing stress and change.
- The County will conduct an ongoing employee awareness campaign regarding wise use of health care system and preventable health care costs.

Use of County Time to Participate in Wellness Training and Activities

- If all or part of these programs is conducted during the employee's normal work hours, the employee may attend County-sponsored programs on County time consistent with departmental policies and with supervisor's approval.

7. PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Existing County Buildings:

- Recognizing the benefits of a healthy, productive workforce, the County is encouraged to maintain and consider improving upon the conditions of existing County facilities to the extent such modifications are practical and consistent with the County's operational, financial, and other needs:
 - Keep walking paths clear of snow, ice and debris
 - Provide bike racks
 - Make stairwells more inviting to use (e.g., bright paint, repairs), make walking paths inviting, and fully equip and conveniently situate employee break rooms;
 - Develop and post signage to promote walking routes on County property and around County buildings;
 - To the extent the County plans to renovate or improve existing County facilities, the County is encouraged to consider incorporating a dedicated space for wellness activities.

Support for Breastfeeding Women in the Workplace:

The work environment will comply with the [federal lactation accommodation law](#), part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

EVALUATION:

The County Wellness Committee will seek guidance/consultation for and/or develop an evaluation plan that aims to measure progress made toward achieving goals put forward within the wellness policy. Evaluation shall be developed *prior* to implementation. The Committee will consider revisions to policy based on results of evaluation.

EXHIBIT A Food & Nutrition Standards

The food and nutrient content standards are based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities](#) and in alignment with the [U.S. Department of Agriculture Dietary Guidelines](#) (2015).

Pre-Packaged Food and Snacks (on-site food service, vending machines, commissaries, catering and other food purchased with department funds)

Packaged snacks contain ≤ 200 mg sodium per package

Packaged snacks have 0 grams of trans fat

At least 50% of packaged snacks meet the following food and nutrient standards.

Food Standards:

Have as the first ingredient a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food;

Be a whole grain-rich grain product; or

Be a combination food that contains at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit and/or vegetable.

AND

Nutrient Standards:

Calorie limit: ≤ 200 calories

Saturated fat limit: $< 10\%$ of calories

Exemptions: Reduced-fat cheese and part skim mozzarella; nuts, seeds and nut/seed butters; and dried fruit with nuts /seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats.

Sugar limit: $\leq 35\%$ of weight from total sugars in foods.

Exemptions: Dried /dehydrated whole fruits or vegetables with no added nutritive sweeteners; dried whole fruits or pieces with nutritive sweeteners required for processing and/or palatability; products consisting of only exempt dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats

Pre-Packaged Beverages (onsite food service, vending machines, commissaries, catering and purchased with department funds):

- Provide free access to chilled, potable water.
- When milk and fortified soy beverages are available, offer low-fat beverages with no added sugars.
- When juice is available, offer 100% juice with no added sugars.
- At least 50% of available beverage choices contain ≤ 40 calories per 8 fluid ounces (excluding 100% juice and unsweetened fat-free or low-fat [1%] milk).

Beverage Service (onsite food service, catering and purchased with department funds):

- Coffee and decaffeinated coffee, hot and/or iced
- Tea and decaffeinated tea, hot and/or iced
- Non-fat, 1%, and 2% milk only; soy or rice milk is OK
- Water pitchers

Prepared Foods (onsite food service, catering and purchased with department funds):

- County and contracted food service operations will offer food and beverages consistent with the most current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- To the extent reasonably possible, prepared food may include but are not limited to:
 - Food preparation that limits added fat (bake, grill, steamed, roasted)
 - Offer added fats on the side (e.g., dressings, mayonnaise);
 - Use whole grain products when possible;
 - Be mindful of portion sizes;
 - Side dishes, appetizers, and desserts should emphasize seasonal fruits and/or vegetables;
 - Offer healthy side dishes as the default selection;
 - Include at least one vegetable and/or one fruit with entrée;
 - Prepare food with minimal added sugars, caloric sweeteners and/or salt;
 - Avoid fats and oils high in saturated fats.

APPROVED: October 3, 2018