

For Immediate Release

Northeast Business Group on Health Releases Employer Guide to Evaluate Weight Management Programs Amid COVID-19

Guide includes five-step action plan for employers

NEW YORK, September 23, 2020 – Northeast Business Group on Health (NEBGH) has released [“Workplace Weight Management in the New Normal,”](#) a new guide to help HR and benefits leaders address overweight and obesity issues facing millions of employees. The release of the guide comes at a time when COVID-19 is disrupting many traditional onsite workplace weight management and wellness programs.

Obesity is common and rising in prevalence. According to some estimates, nearly half of all U.S. adults are projected to be classified as obese by 2030. Studies show obesity is also costly to employers. Taking into account direct medical costs and indirect productivity costs including lost productivity, absenteeism, disability and workers’ compensation, obesity costs U.S. employers over \$73 billion annually.

“Overweight and obesity are complex issues. There is no one, simple solution. COVID-19 has disrupted many workplace weight management and wellness programs, but as we grapple with a new normal now and for the foreseeable future, there are many opportunities to revamp and refresh programs and policies that help employees deal with weight-related issues,” said NEBGH CEO Candice Sherman. “Obesity has been identified as a significant risk factor for serious COVID-19 complications as well as for other conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Employers have an especially important role to play since their employees’ health and well-being – and that of their organization — are at stake,” said Sherman.

The guide, **Workplace Weight Management in the New Normal**, provides employers with a five-step action plan for reviewing and updating their programs. The action plan includes detailed information on how employers can: gain a better understanding of weight management challenges; assess what is and isn’t working with their programs; refresh management strategies and tactics; boost the likelihood of their program’s success, and evaluate outcomes.

Given the millions of employees working from home during the pandemic, an integral component of the guide is a list of over three dozen both on-site and work-from-home “environmental interventions” focused on healthy eating and physical activity. These include:

Work-from-home Interventions

- Provide employees with resources specific to eating healthy while working from home
- Offer virtual healthy cooking demonstrations
- Promote access to healthy meal and delivery services; consider subsidized subscriptions
- Utilize digital tools that promote physical activity
- Offer live or taped virtual fitness classes
- Coordinate employee-side step challenges
- Offer mobile apps for managing stress

On-site Interventions

- Increase availability of healthy foods and beverages in cafeterias and vending machines
- Encourage selection of healthier food and beverages through reduced, subsidized or free pricing in cafeterias and vending machines

- Offer only healthier options at meetings or when catering events
- Provide onsite exercise options such as gyms, fitness classes or walking trails
- Offer onsite destressing spaces for meditation, resting and games.

The 36-page guide includes examples of digital weight management tools that are available to employers as well as a list of weight management resources for employees. Additionally, the guide features case studies of four major employers' successful weight management programs that relied on incentives, digital tools, and virtual and onsite meetings to promote healthy weight behaviors among their employees.

The guide is available free of charge to all employers and the public at large, and can be accessed [here](#).

About Northeast Business Group on Health

NEBGH is an employer-led, multi-stakeholder coalition that empowers members to drive excellence in health and achieve the highest value in healthcare delivery and the consumer experience. NEBGH employer/purchaser members cover 6 million lives in the U.S. and 10 million globally.

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