

# WORKPLACE WELLNESS

Provided by Deutsch & Associates, LLC



## Initiatives for High Blood Pressure

Hypertension, more commonly referred to as high blood pressure, is a chronic medical condition in which the artery walls are exposed to constant, steady pressure causing the heart's muscles to weaken. The disease affects 1 out of 3 Americans and is often one of the leading contributing causes of serious health problems, such as:

- Heart attack or stroke
- Kidney failure
- Increased risk for blood clots, diabetes and dementia

Despite the ease in which the condition can be diagnosed, more than half of people with the condition fail to receive proper, adequate treatment. The condition costs the U.S. economy an estimated \$46 billion in health care, treatment costs and lost productivity—according to the American Heart Association. Fortunately, there are activities and programs that your business can institute to help promote heart health and wellness in your employees.

### *Wellness Initiatives*

Improving heart health can be as simple as eating a heart-healthy diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, nuts and fish, or getting regular exercise—like taking a daily walk. However, it can be challenging to motivate your employees to adopt these activities when they are outside of work. For that reason, here are three programs and activities that you can implement to help your employees make healthier decisions:

- Provide regular wellness screenings either on-site or through a health clinic for all interested employees. These informal appointments should provide employees with a snapshot of their overall wellbeing. If any employees are diagnosed with high blood pressure, encourage them to visit his or her doctor to receive formal treatment.
- Distribute monthly wellness newsletters that provide strategies on how to remain healthy. Additionally, supplement the newsletters by offering health and wellness seminars to provide your employees with both the tools and knowledge to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Create opportunities at your business for your employees to participate in physical activities and a heart-healthy diet by:
  - Promoting healthy alternatives in cafeterias and vending machines. You can achieve this by contacting your food distributor and requesting healthier options—such as nuts, fresh and dried fruits, whole grains, and fewer microwavable meals.
  - Encouraging some type of exercise. Your company does not need a gym or designated walking trails to help your employees stay healthy. Instead, you can encourage them to take a walk around the building during their breaks. By walking at least 6,000 steps every day, your employees can improve their health.
  - Placing signs by elevators that encourage people to use the stairs. By taking the stairs each day, your employees can cut their risk of heart attacks in half.

### *Healthier Employees Are More Productive Employees*

Heart disease contributes to absences from work, poor performance and even death. By motivating and empowering your employees to make smart health and wellness decisions, you can keep your health care costs low while also increasing productivity. Simple and straightforward initiatives, such as providing healthier vending machine options and health education, can make an impressive impact.