

**Wellness Works**  
**Keynote for Worksite Forum**  
**3/29/16**

**Objectives:**

- Highlight HSIDN successes as a way of painting the big picture of transforming region
- Inspire those present to start or enhance their worksite wellness programs
- Increase focus on PSE at worksites
- Model worksite wellness

**Materials:**

Prezi

HSIDN accomplishments—in folder

**Outline:**

Introduction

It is my great pleasure to be with you today. When I was asked to speak I was a little dubious since I don't meet the standard definition of expert—which is someone who lives at least 50 miles away. In fact, I have called Carbondale my home for over 25 years. What I do have to offer is having spent a good part of my career in public health trying to figure out how to get people to make healthy choices and how to make those healthy choices, the easy choice. I am a big picture person, I like to know how what I am doing as an employer fits into the big picture so I will share some of the big picture for this region, I will give you more reasons to be interested in providing worksite wellness programs and some lessons learned in my career about making changes that stick.

Progress in Region--HSIDN

- Today's forum and worksite wellness is a part of our strategy toward reaching the goal of transforming Southern Illinois into a region that supports and enhances healthy living. Let me tell you a little of how we organized ourselves to accomplish this goal.
- This region has had some of the worst health outcomes and highest poverty rates in the state. Eight years ago health leaders in Southern Illinois recognized these facts and decided that by working together we would be better able to have an impact, so we formed the Healthy Southern Illinois Delta Network. The network covers 15 of the counties in Illinois that are part of the Delta Regional Authority and we recognize that we share our poor health outcomes and significant poverty with the rest of the Mississippi Delta Region.
- The LHDs in this region with the support and leadership of our hospital system, Southern Illinois Healthcare, and SIU School of Medicine are partners in this network and have built or strengthened local health coalitions. It is through our coalitions that we reach out and engage our communities.
- At the regional level we have made a significant start on transforming our region. We have set these objectives and we are working across the community to develop policies, systems, and environmental changes. This infrastructure for sustainability supports making healthy choices and promoting better nutrition, more physical activity, and smoke free environments and improving chronic disease self-management. Let's take a virtual tour of these accomplishments.
- We are making progress on breathing easy at home or outdoors-- We are working with parks, beaches, ball fields and public housing to be smoke free. Our children have designed

signs asking that the public keep our parks and playground smoke free. We have posted over 200 signs throughout our communities. Two housing authorities with 386 units have adopted smoke-free policies.

- Schools-- are a great place to improve health. We have a team of educators who are currently working with schools in the region. As we start to work with each school we develop a wellness committee to provide support to the programming which will ensure sustainability. It is with this committee that the assessment and all programming is planned.
- A cornerstone to this work, has been supporting schools in adopting the Coordinated Approach To Child Health program. We have over 80 schools which have adopted the CATCH program to lower obesity through more activity, healthy food, and fun lessons on health. This has been a collaboration with SIUC, Delta Regional Authority, LHDs, SIH and the schools.
- Our faith communities have not been left out. Southern Illinois Healthcare has built an infrastructure of health ministries throughout the region. Over 50 faith organizations have active programs which include nurses trained to promote health in their congregations. Coming soon is a training for Congregational Health Connectors, leaders without a nursing background who can also promote health.
- In our region Southern Illinois Healthcare is taking the lead on transforming our health care system on many levels. The Memorial Hospital of Carbondale has earned the designation, Baby Friendly, due to the policies and practices that they have put in place to support breastfeeding moms. SIH has also taken the lead in forming a region wide infrastructure of over 50 trainers who are providing chronic disease and diabetes self-management classes in their communities. Working with the coalitions, community resource guides have been developed to more effectively link doctor's offices to community services. These are available on [hsidn.org](http://hsidn.org).
- Our Community programming has focused on two areas to build a community to promote health. We are increasing access to healthy foods and supporting changes in the physical environment that make being active easier.
- Efforts to increase access to healthy foods include increasing access to farmer's markets to those on government assistance programs by not only accepting food stamps or vouchers but also giving double the produce for the price, encouraging farm to school programs, supporting school and community gardens, and a new program to work with convenience stores to expand the healthy foods being offered in their stores.
- We have also been working with partners to support changes in the environment to promote physical activity. Carbondale has adopted a Complete Streets Resolution and is finalizing a Comprehensive Bike Plan, and IDOT is building multi-use paths throughout Williamson and Jackson Counties. This summer Carbondale planners will be holding a workshop for the region on building healthier communities, look for that invitation.
- This brings us to worksites, we have also worked directly with 32 employers throughout the region to develop Worksite Wellness programs. This is the fourth forum we have held to promote Worksite Wellness. Today's agenda is organized around how to start and enhance Worksite wellness programs so that each worksite is making active living and healthy eating the easy choices. In Southern Illinois, we have mostly smaller employers and much of our efforts have focused on toolkits which include resources and ideas that can be implemented by smaller employers (under 199). Our panelists will share their successes and lessons learned and the break-out sessions will provide an opportunity to learn more about the step you are at or need help with.
- Worksite wellness is essential in transforming our region. Worksites are where our employees spend most of their time and our employees are our greatest asset. For every dollar invested in

worksite wellness there is a \$6 return on this investment. Studies have found that there is reduction of medical costs and an increase in productivity due to less absenteeism. Six dollars for every dollar--this is a strong return on investment. Return on investment is strongest when worksites are successful in changing their work culture to one that embraces and supports health. These are worksites that are making the healthy choices the easy choices. We have to make active living and healthy eating the easier choices, actually safer, more convenient, less costly and even more fun than alternatives.

- To make active living and healthy eating a part of your work culture, you have to focus on both short and long term strategies. You want to build support and ensure sustainability.
  - A lesson learned from worksites and in all of our work across the community is the need to build support, get buy-in from leadership by building a team of wellness champions. These champions ensure that progress is monitored, reported back on and celebrated.
  - Start from where you are; assess the needs and opportunities unique to your worksite. How can physical activity be incorporated into the workday, are there environmental changes that could increase physical activity or access to healthy foods or water as a beverage of choice, what benefits are already offered, what benefits do your employees want?
- When Designing and implementing programs be sure to look for elements that increase stickiness—sustainability. You might offer a one & done as a way to increase awareness but major focus needs to be on ways to change the culture of your workplace.

There are 3 P's to Stickiness: programs, projects and policies.

- When you offer **programs**, use these to build awareness and & encourage change-can start here to build support but focus on long term change. A health fair is going to get people's attention, but health coaching is going to be more successful in making long term changes.
- **Projects** that improve the physical environment for active lifestyles have stickiness/sustainability. Examples would be to post point of decision prompts to increase stair usage, make the stairs more attractive by posting artwork, ensuring the stairs are well lit—these inexpensive steps that help change from a routine of using the elevators to one of using the stairs; look for other ways to create more walkable, bike-friendly facilities; support and promote active commute program by sponsoring a bike to work day and having bike racks and showers available for use, develop and post worksite walking paths, explore an interest of worksite gardens, invite farmers to sell produce right after work. Make it EASY.
- Changing workplace policies means you are rewriting the rules so the changes stick and so that healthy choices are easier. Policies are a key to building a culture of health within your worksite: offer flex time for wellness activities, encourage physical activity breaks, encourage staff to sit less by offering standing desks and walking meetings, adopt a policy to ensure access to healthy food at worksite events, provide rewards for physical activity and wellness through insurance discounts or providing time-off, or take a health in all policies approach to ensure that all employee policies are viewed through a lens of the possible positive or negative side effect to health

Keep track of what is working and what isn't. Worksite wellness is not a one and done venture but rather continuous spiral of improvement.

Closing

Our goal is to transform Southern Illinois into a region that supports and enhances healthy living—we can do this together. Worksite wellness makes for healthier and happier employees but also contributes to culture of health in community and helps your employees be better role models of healthy choices for their families. Building a culture of health comes with challenges and opportunities. Face your challenges with the strength and conviction that what we do makes a difference. Face your opportunities with open arms and look for ways to build on the assets you have!