

PRESS RELEASE

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CDC Introduces New Website to Help Employers Combat Obesity and Reduce Health-Related Costs

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today unveiled *LEANWorks!*, a Website designed to help businesses address obesity. *LEAN* stands for Leading Employees to Activity and Nutrition. The new Website was announced at a National Business Group on Health meeting in Washington, D.C.

“CDC *LEANWorks!* was developed in direct response to organizations asking CDC for help in addressing the obesity epidemic. Specifically they wanted to know what interventions were effective in helping employees maintain a healthy weight,” said William Dietz, M.D., Ph.D., director of CDC’s Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. “CDC has identified science-based interventions that work to prevent and control obesity. CDC *LEANWorks!* provides the tools that employers need to take action.”

The free Website was developed particularly for small and mid-size companies, which typically have more limited resources to devote to obesity prevention efforts. However, the tools and resources available on CDC *LEANWorks!* can benefit companies of any size. CDC *LEANWorks!* can help employers calculate the cost of obesity for their organizations and develop tailored approaches to help control these costs through interventions such as fitness classes, lunchtime health education sessions, weight management programs, and more.

The Website provides a variety of resources to employers including:

- An obesity cost-calculator where employers can input employee demographic data to estimate the total costs associated with obesity and determine annual obesity-related medical costs for their companies.
- Information and resources to help employers plan, build, promote, and assess interventions to combat obesity.
- Information on how employers can estimate return on investment, a measure of the cost of an intervention compared to the expected financial return of the intervention.

Obesity is a risk factor for high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and heart disease. Obese individuals spend 77 percent more money for necessary medications than non-obese persons.

“Obesity affects more than just health care costs. It also has a significant impact on worker productivity because the more chronic diseases employees have, the more likely they are to be absent from work, or less productive if they come to work sick,” said Janet Collins, Ph.D., director of CDC’s National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

Because organizations do not usually publish information about their worksite programs in the scientific literature, CDC visited select businesses to identify promising worksite obesity prevention and control practices. The CDC *LEANWorks!* website provides case studies from some of those businesses to provide examples of successful worksite obesity prevention programs.

“Workplace obesity prevention programs can be an effective way for employers to reduce obesity and lower their health care costs, lower absenteeism and increase employee productivity,” said Dr. Dietz. Employers may also see other indirect benefits when they implement these programs such as improved employee morale, increased worker retention, and improved recruitment of new employees.”

To learn more about CDC *LEANWorks!* visit www.cdc.gov/leanworks. For more information about CDC’s efforts to combat obesity please visit www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa