

May is Global Employee Health and Fitness Month

There are many benefits to businesses that choose to celebrate employee health and fitness month. One benefit is it can reignite a currently existing wellness program within your company or it can create excess interest in starting a new program. Global Employee Health and Fitness Month (GEHFM) originally started as a one day celebration. However, research has proven that to create healthy behavior modifications it takes time to develop positive lifestyle changes.

Numerous workers around the globe suffer from diseases and disorders that are preventable. Workers have modifiable risk factors that lead to many diseases disorders and sometimes premature death. Astounding percentages, near 40%, of deaths each year in the United States are premature due to unhealthy lifestyle choices. These unhealthy lifestyle choices create common risk factors that increase health care costs and decrease productivity in the workplace. Helping your employees understand and gain knowledge of these risk factors through effective health promotion and prevention programs can help prevent diseases and can be cost effective for employers worldwide.

An employee's lifestyle can affect their health in so many ways. Unhealthy lifestyle behaviors are the major factor in six of the leading causes of death in the U.S. The six leading causes of death include heart disease, cancer, stroke, respiratory diseases, accidents and diabetes. Unhealthy lifestyle choices can include tobacco use, poor diet, sedentary lifestyle, misuse of alcohol and drugs and accidents.

Employers and employees can participate in health promotion practices to help bend the cost curve and prevent some of these risk factors. Montana Chamber Choices Health Insurance and Wellness Program of the Montana Chamber of Commerce is a large supporter of employee wellness, and often participates in wellness programs. We encourage employers to keep their employees healthy by participating in Global Employee Health and Fitness Month. Please go to www.healthandfitnessmonth.org to learn how to get involved.

