



Working Well: Progress in 2016

Working Well is a comprehensive strategy to establish cultures of healthy living and improved population health in South Carolina. The initiative began in 2011 and has continued to expand its engagement with employers across different sectors by focusing on the policies, environments, and benefits available at their workplaces. Core topic areas include tobacco use, poor nutrition and physical inactivity; in more recent years, the focus has expanded to include behavioral and financial wellbeing. This document provides a summary of the impact of the project in 2016.

Targeting Areas of Need to Improve Population Health in South Carolina

Working Well is the sole evidence-based worksite intervention strategy included in the South Carolina Obesity Action Plan, SCaledown. In 2016, *Working Well* sustained the engagement of long-time hospital partners and continued engagement with the South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control and state cabinet agencies. It also expanded to targeted counties to engage new hospitals, businesses, municipalities and state agencies in areas with the highest levels of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Commitment to a Culture of Wellness



Thus far, senior leaders from over 130 South Carolina organizations have put their commitment to wellness into writing with *Working Well*. The goal is to create policies and environments that make the healthy choice the default choice for all employees within the workplace. Organizations engaged in *Working Well* over the past six years employ over 130,000 South Carolinians – 3.4% of the total adult population of South Carolina.

Assessing Progress using WorkHealthy America

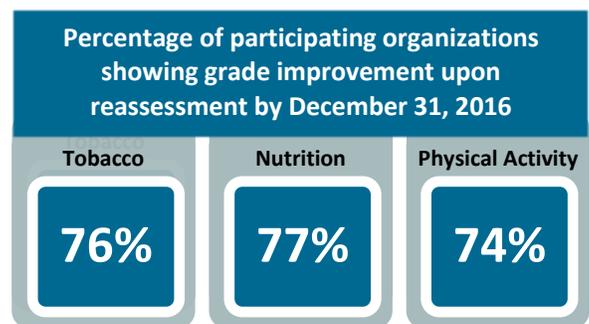
Working Well organizations have used WorkHealthy America to assess their policies, environments, and benefits related to organizational culture, tobacco use, nutrition and physical activity. A new assessment related to psychosocial health also became available in 2016. The WorkHealthy

America assessment was developed by Prevention Partners based on reviews of scientific evidence, public health expert input, and practice testing. Each assessment provides organizations with grades, ranging from A's to F's, tailored recommendations and action plans to help them move toward the highest standard in employee wellness. Organizations with 'A' grades are eligible for recognition for their commitment to workplace health and prevention.

In 2016, 76 South Carolina organizations had access to WorkHealthy America; 12 of these organizations completed baseline assessment to evaluate their policies, environments, and benefits. Ninety-two percent of organizations that reassessed after completing a baseline assessment improved by at least one letter grade in one or more areas. The percentage of organizations that demonstrated grade improvement has been strong across all three topic areas. Additionally, 30 organizations (39% of active participants) met one or more recognition standards in 2016.

Culture of Wellness

A primary focus of *Working Well* has been to strengthen employee wellness programs by implementing lasting policies, expanding human and financial capacity for wellness, and evaluating programs – making wellness a new norm for their workplace. This has been an essential area of growth for participating organizations. In 2016, the areas of greatest improvements have included having a wellness committee that meets on a regular basis, identifying clearly stated organizational wellness goals, conducting annual employee health and wellness interest surveys, and holding multiple leadership team members responsible for promoting organizational health and wellness initiatives. Remaining challenges include utilizing incentives to encourage employees to take a Health Risk Assessment (HRA), sharing the value of company-wide and individual wellness benefits in annual compensation statements, and measuring the impact of wellness initiatives on employee productivity.



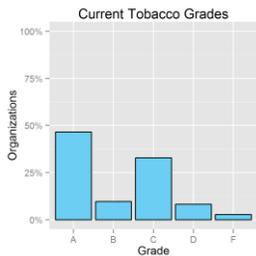
In 2016, nine South Carolina organizations achieved or sustained the high wellness standards required to be awarded the WorkHealthy America Excellence Recognition. These organizations have aligned efforts to implement a culture of wellness with top grades in three *Working Well* focus areas: nutrition, physical activity and tobacco-free.



Tobacco-Free People and Places

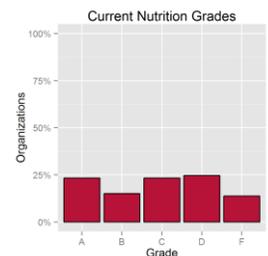
On average, tobacco-free grades have always been the highest, and *Working Well* organizations continue to show strong improvements in this area. Thirty-four SC organizations (46% of the active cohort) received an A grade in this area in 2016. A large majority of participating organizations now offer FDA-approved cessation medications on formulary, offer quit tobacco coaching as an employee benefit, offer over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapies

to help employees quit, and actively communicate about these benefits. There have been significant improvements in the implementation of quit tobacco systems, including asking tobacco users about their readiness to quit, counseling all tobacco users to quit, offering incentives for participation in a tobacco cessation program, periodically following up with tobacco users, and evaluating the effectiveness of tobacco cessation programs. Although the majority of participating organizations (73%) have adopted tobacco-free policies, a remaining challenge is that there has been little change in the number of organizations implementing property-wide tobacco-free policies, making those policies clearly visible through signage, and actively communicating such policies.



Healthy Food Environments

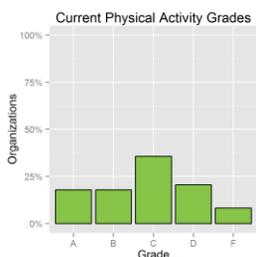
Consistently offering delicious, healthy foods to employees has been a challenge for *Working Well* organizations, but most organizations participating in 2016 (77%) have shown at least one letter grade of improvement since joining. Notable improvements have included offering nutrition counseling to all employees, regardless of health status, making healthy food and beverages available during all hours of operation, and offering healthy weight and good nutrition programming. The greatest improvement has been in the number of organizations that actively communicate to employees about employee benefits that support good nutrition. In 2016, eighteen SC organizations met or sustained the highest standard in providing a healthy food environment for their employees. Opportunities still remain for SC organizations to maximize the value of healthy food policies by communicating these policies to all employees and evaluating their impact. Also, there has been limited change in the percentage of organizations that educate food service staff about healthy food preparation and portion control – essential elements to ensure healthy options are available through on-site food service.



Access and Opportunity for Physical Activity

Addressing physical inactivity in the workplace has been a new undertaking for many *Working Well* organizations, but changes are being made through policy, the built environmental and benefits. Areas of strength include offering

employees a discount to join a local exercise facility, providing on-site or nearby physical activity facilities, and encouraging physical activity through peer support. There has been strong growth in the utilization of point-of-decision prompts to encourage more physical activity and extended accessibility of on-site exercise facilities beyond the workday. While *Working Well* hospitals have demonstrated the feasibility of policies that support the use of flex time and paid work time for physical activity during the workday, these are the least common strategies to support physical activity among the current cohort of organizations. Thirteen current SC organizations have achieved the highest standard in this area.



Continuing to Impact Employee and Population Health

Working Well had a strong impact in 2016, extending its reach from SCHA hospital members to the Healthier State House initiative to targeted communities where hospitals, public entities and private businesses worked together to make changes. In 2017, the focus will shift towards applying *Working Well* principles to a broader array of wellness topics, and many participating organizations will begin using a new evaluation tool, designed to tie directly to the State Obesity Action Plan, SCaledown. A data sharing agreement between SCHA and Prevention Partners will enable continued progress tracking for organizations that have participated in *Working Well* over the past seven years and sustained focus on prevention as an essential strategy to address chronic disease in South Carolina.