

WORKSITE HEALTH PROMOTION POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN GEORGIA:

2002 Georgia Worksite Survey

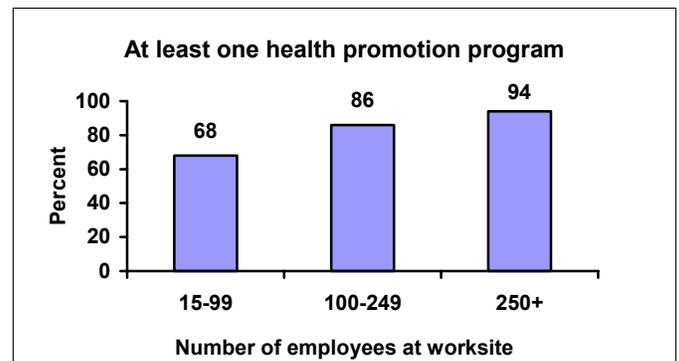


Worksites are important settings for policies, programs, and environments with potential to reach a large proportion of the adult population. According to the 1999 National Worksite Health Promotion Survey, the top concern related to employee health reported by worksites was healthcare costs (94%).¹ Healthcare costs for people with chronic diseases account for 75% of total healthcare costs in the nation.² As most employers share the burden of healthcare costs, keeping workers healthy and free from diseases and risk factors should be a major concern and goal. In addition to lower direct healthcare costs, some studies suggest that healthy workers are more productive and absent less often.³

With the majority of adults in Georgia not getting enough physical activity or proper nutrition,⁴ worksites provide an opportune setting to tackle these challenges by modifying and creating policies and environments that support healthy behaviors.⁵ The following is a summary of results from the 2002 Georgia Worksite Health Promotion Policies and Practices Survey of private sector worksites with at least 15 employees.

Key Results

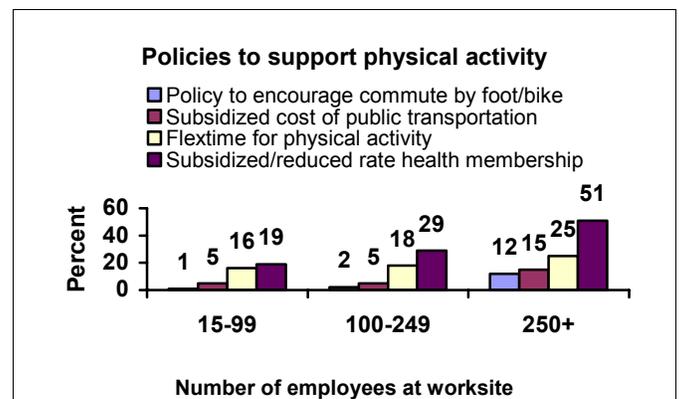
- 73% of all worksites reported offering at least one health promotion program.
- Larger worksites were more likely to provide health promotion programs than smaller worksites.
- Small worksites are important since 78% of worksites in Georgia had less than 100 employees while accounting for 31% of employees in 2000.⁶



Worksite Policies Supporting Healthy Behavior

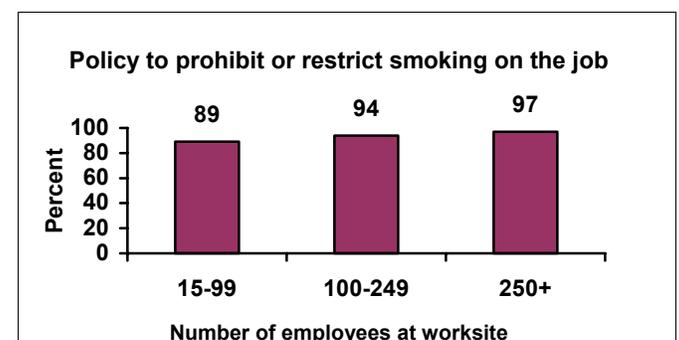
Physical Activity Policies

- Policies to encourage activity during commute to and from work were uncommon. Only 2% had a policy to encourage commute by foot or bike and 6% subsidized the cost of public transportation.
- 17% of worksites offered flextime or special breaks for physical activity.
- 23% of worksites offered subsidized or reduced rate health memberships.



Tobacco Policies

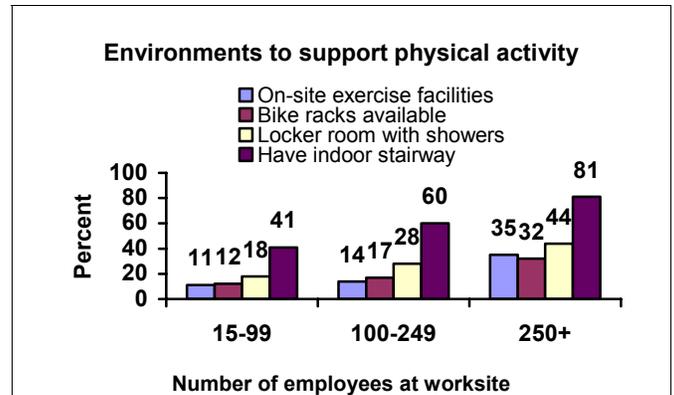
- The majority (90%) of worksites had a formal tobacco policy to prohibit or restrict smoking on the job.
- 77% of worksites with a tobacco policy allowed smoking on the grounds but not inside.
- 14% of worksites with a tobacco policy allowed smoking in designated areas inside.



Worksite Environment Supporting Healthy Behavior

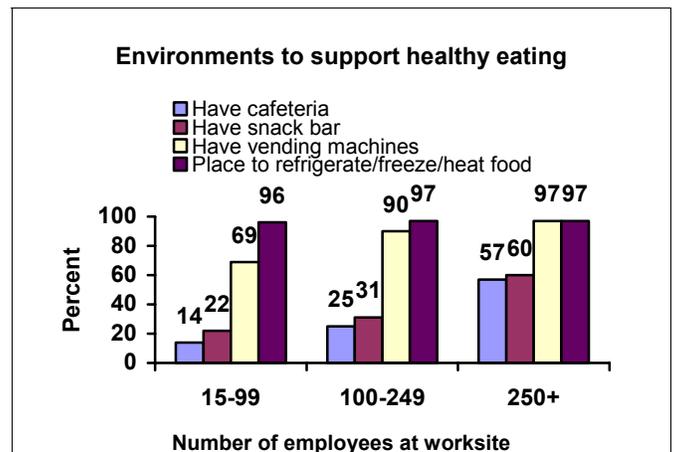
Environments Supporting Physical Activity

- On-site exercise facilities were available in 13% of worksites overall; indoor gyms and workout rooms were most common.
- Availability of bike racks (15%) and locker room with showers (21%) support active commuting.
- Indoor stairways available in almost half of worksites (47%) can be used to promote stair usage to increase activity during work hours.



Environments Supporting Food Availability

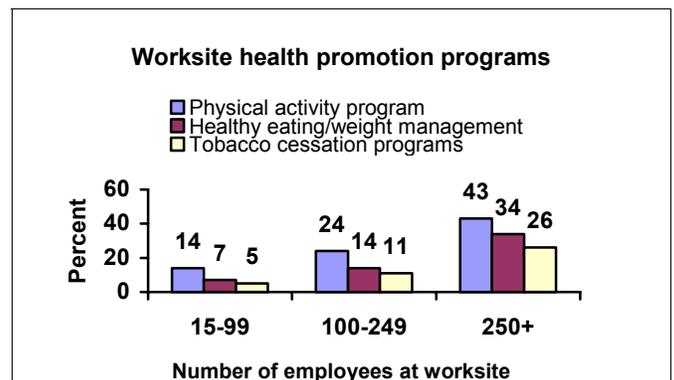
- Worksites with cafeterias (19%) and snack bars (26%) provide possible venues for promoting healthy eating.
- Vending machines were widely available (74%), providing opportunity to supply and promote bottled water and healthier snacks instead of soda and candy.
- Having a place to refrigerate, freeze, and heat food was the norm (97%) allowing employees to bring healthier alternatives to fast foods.



Health Promotion Practices

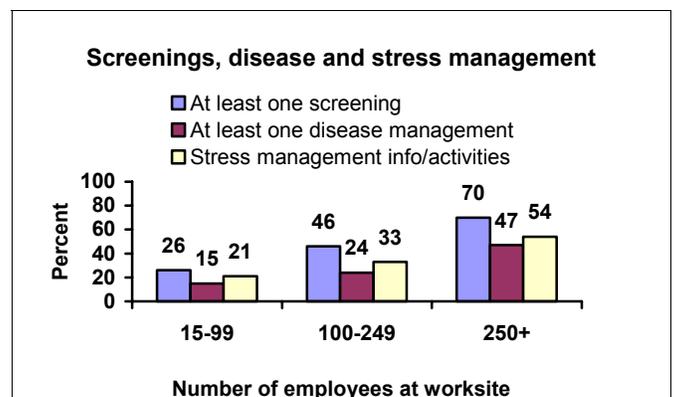
Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Tobacco Programs

- Physical activity or fitness programs were offered in 17% of worksites.
- Healthy eating or weight management classes or counseling were offered in 10% of worksites.
- Smoking cessation classes or counseling were offered in 8% of worksites.



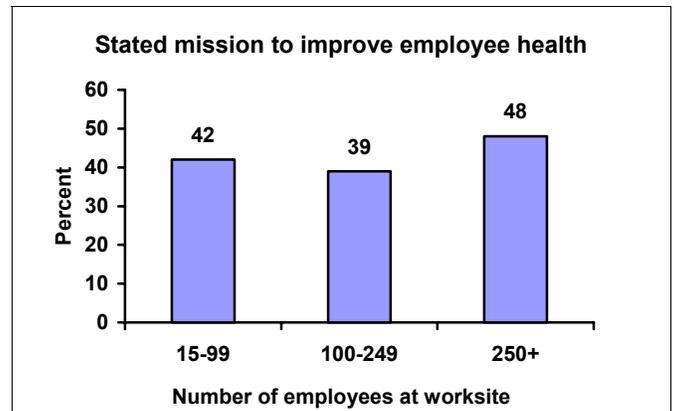
Screenings, Disease and Stress Management

- 32% of worksites offered at least one screening; blood pressure screenings were most common.
- 19% of worksites offered at least one disease management program which included heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and mental health management programs.
- 25% of worksites offered stress management information or activities.



Company Mission to Improve Employee Health

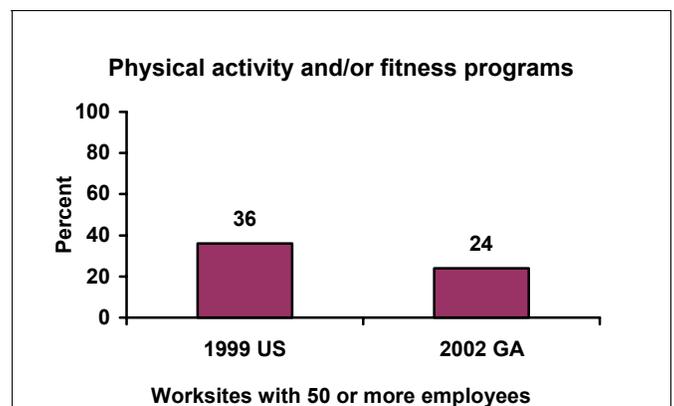
- 42% of the worksites had employee health improvement as a stated mission for the company, which did not vary significantly according to size.
- Worksites with a mission to improve employee health were more likely to offer health promotion programs such as screenings, healthy behavior and awareness classes, and provide financial incentives for participation.



Comparison with 1999 National Data

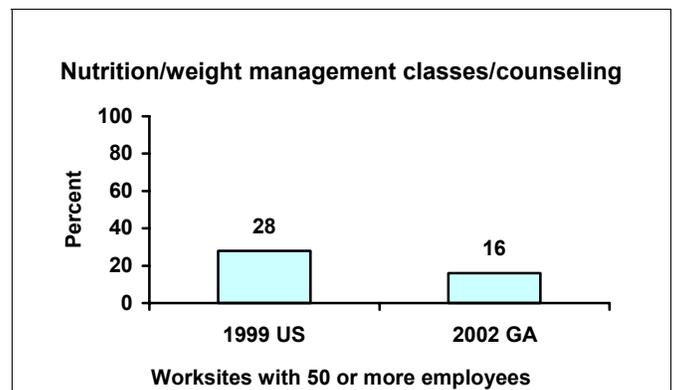
Physical Activity Programs

- 36% of US worksites with 50 or more employees offered physical activity and/or fitness programs at the worksite and 46% offered the program at the worksite or through their health plans in 1999.
- 24% of Georgia worksites with 50 or more employees offered a physical activity or fitness program in 2002.



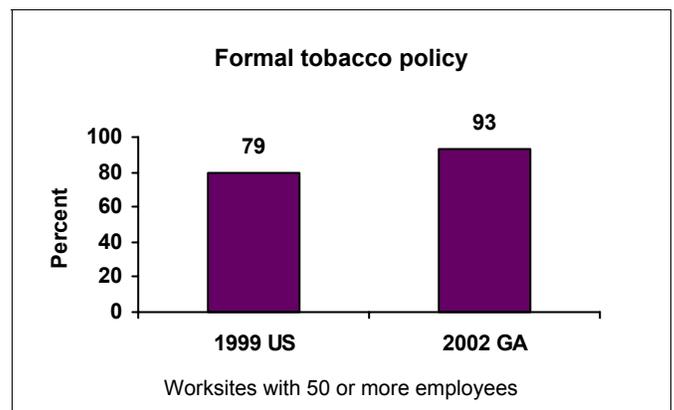
Nutrition or Weight Management Programs

- 28% of US worksites with 50 or more employees offered nutrition or weight management classes or counseling at the worksite and 55% of worksites offered the program at the worksite or through their health plans in 1999.
- 16% of Georgia worksites with 50 or more employees offered nutrition or weight management classes or counseling.



Tobacco Policy

- 79% of US worksites with 50 or more employees had formal smoking policies that prohibited or limited smoking to separately ventilated areas in 1999.
- 93% of Georgia worksites with 50 or more employees had a formal tobacco policy in 2002.
- The *Healthy People 2010*⁷ objective for worksites having a formal tobacco policy that prohibits or limits smoking to separately ventilated areas is 100% for worksites with 50 or more employees.



Recommendations for Promoting a Healthy Work Environment and Workforce

- Create a worksite wellness committee and a company mission to improve employee health.
- Implement the *Georgia Worksite Assessment Tool** to create a needs and priority list for worksite health.
- Post signs and point-of-decision prompts near elevators and stairways to promote stair usage.⁸
- Create or enhance access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach activities.⁸
- Provide subsidized or reduced fees for health memberships and flexible schedules for physical activity.
- Promote active commuting by parking 15 minutes from work or getting off one stop early from public transport.⁹
- Offer healthy choices in cafeterias, snack bars, and vending machines and promote them through point-of-purchase signs and price subsidies.¹⁰
- Implement or expand coverage of tobacco policy to prohibit smoking anywhere at worksite.
- Provide health risk assessments and health screenings and follow up with high-risk employees.
- Provide appropriate disease management programs on topics such as hypertension and diabetes.
- Provide training and post information on signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke and when to call 911.
- Maintain automated external defibrillators (AED) onsite and provide appropriate AED and CPR training.

Methodology and Sample Size

The Georgia Worksite Health Promotion Policies and Practices Survey, modeled after the National Worksite Health Promotion Survey, was conducted for the first time in 2002 to document existing policies, environments, and programs affecting the health of Georgia workers. Computer-assisted telephone interviews were conducted with the director of human resources or employee health. Survey findings represent a random sample of private sector worksites with at least 15 employees identified from the Dun and Bradstreet database. Worksites were stratified into three size categories: small (15-99), medium (100-249), and large (250+) and four industry categories. A total of 1,085 worksites completed the survey with a response rate of 54%. Final data were weighted so that each stratum represented its true proportion in the worksite population.

References

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*For more information and resources for worksite wellness programs including the *Georgia Worksite Assessment Tool*, please contact:

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