**Georgia Working on Health**

**Eat Live Healthy**

**Physical Activity Policies**

Congratulations on your decision to support physical activity in your workplace. Many employees spend the majority of their waking hours at work, giving employers a prime opportunity to encourage employees to increase their physical activity levels throughout the day. Employers that promote exercise among their employees have reported greater productivity and less absenteeism. Your next step is to develop a written policy on physical activity at your workplace.

**Why do you need a written physical activity policy?**

A worksite health policy is a set of statements around the specific health-related practices promoted within your organization. Policies set direction, shape programming and establish expectations for your organizational leadership and staff members. Creating a policy is your organization’s commitment to operating in a certain way. Traditionally, a policy is developed first then used as the basis for establishing practices.

Policies are most effective when written; having a written policy will eliminate any confusion regarding the specifics of the policy. Adopting a policy may be as simple as writing it and putting it in your organization’s handbook or it may require a bit more time.

**Sample Physical Activity Policy Statements**

From City of Ottawa, Ontario:

(Worksite Name) is committed to creating a work environment that promotes employee health, physical activity, breaks from periods of sitting and contributes to the health of our community. (Worksite name) will support Employee Wellness Committee driven opportunities that:

* Increase employee awareness of the health benefits of being physically active and breaking up sitting time
* Support and encourage physical activity for employees while at work
* Support and encourage the use of active and sustainable transportation to, from and at work

Adapted from <http://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents.ottawa.ca/files/documents/sp_physicalactivity_en.pdf>.

(Middlesex-London Health Unit and Ottawa Public Health)

From Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH):

The Commissioner supports all Department of Public Health (DPH) employees in engagement in regular physical activity and in making lifestyle choices that promote health and well-being.

The policy of the Department of Public Health will provide up to 30 minutes of the employee scheduled work day to engage in physical activity in support of this philosophy.

**Sample Physical Activity Policy Components**

The first step in creating a worksite health policy is ensuring that the policy meets the needs of your worksite, the employees, and the worksite environment. Your physical activity policy can include a few or all of the components below:

* (Worksite name) encourages all employees to participate in regular physical activity throughout the workday. Employees are allotted (number of minutes) to participate in physical activity while at work.
* Activities at (worksite name) that will promote physical activity among staff include:
  + Having staff meetings in which a set amount of time will be devoted to physical activity such as stretching or walking around the premises.
  + Designing alternative, flexible work schedules that accommodate employee physical activity.
  + Dedicating physical activity time, outside of regularly scheduled breaks, that is allocated specifically for exercise.
  + Creating healthy, safe stairwells that will encourage employees to use the stairs instead of elevators. Stairwells will be maintained, safe, visually appealing, well-lit, and easily accessible.
  + Implementing walking paths or other areas around/in the worksite that employees can use.
  + Establishing and encouraging physical activity breaks throughout the workday.
  + Instituting bike facilities and amenities including bike storage, bike racks, and other amenities that will encourage employees to ride their bike to work instead of other forms of transportation.
  + Creating an incentive program that promotes increased activity levels.
  + Providing opportunities to receive social support in the workplace to encourage physical fitness.

For more information on policy development and implementation, please see the *Work Healthy Georgia* toolkit at <https://dph.georgia.gov/working-on-health>.