

"We often hear how grateful employees are that we not only sponsor but encourage healthy food and active living. This has been one of the best things we've done for employee morale."

-Jane Eastes-
LCSC Director of Operations



"When we started with worksite wellness, we came in and thought 'you know we're already doing a lot of stuff.' Now standing here a year later, we learned so much from that group and we came away with so many more wins than we thought we would have. We realized just how important this process was for our organization," explained Jane Eastes, Director of Operations at Lakes Country Service Cooperative (LCSC) at a legislative forum, December 18, 2015.

At the beginning of 2014, LCSC had a wellness committee and program in place. After participating in PartnerSHIP 4 Health's (PS4H) Worksite Wellness Initiative, they now have what Eastes described as a "vibrant" wellness committee as well as a wellness vision, tagline and logo, and several implemented ideas. LCSC created a more physically active, tobacco-free work environment with healthier food choices and accommodations for nursing mothers.

To increase opportunities for physical activity, LCSC added adjustable standing workstations, posted walking routes maps, supported a daily 10am and 2pm walking group, and participated in a community-wide "Corporate Cup" event that challenged employees to compete athletically. Eastes said, "I consistently hear how much [employees] appreciate the flexibility to be able to do the wellness exercises. We used the storage room to set up an exercise room so there was always something they could do inside if the weather was bad."

Strategies intended to create more opportunity for physical activity resulted in extrinsic benefits as well. "One thing it's really done is strengthened relationships.

People know each other better because they've gone together to participate in something," Eastes stated.

The LCSC worksite wellness committee worked with dietitians to create a healthy catering guideline, and implemented a healthy vending guideline supporting healthy choices. Healthy snack options such as fruit and vegetable packs, whole grain breads and crackers, and yogurt and granola sell for 50 cents in the employee kitchenette. Employees receive healthy eating tips via their email.

Other worksite wellness accomplishments include the creation of a lactation room with a locking door, refrigerator and comfortable chair, and adoption of a tobacco-free campus policy that includes e-cigarettes.

The worksite wellness collaborative enabled LCSC to transform their wellness committee from good to great, and create a culture that encourages wellness. "I'm confident that our wellness focus is sustainable. That is because the work that we did this year was to put in to place changes that made wellness a part of our culture. Even though our wellness activities change from time to time, our wellness focus is always going to be vibrant. And I could not have said that a year ago," said Eastes.

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PartnerSHIP 4 Health is community and public health partners in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties working together to create an environment that supports improved health for all.

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