



Administrative Policy No. 9.09

Subject: DSHS Employee Wellness Program

Information Contact: DSHS Human Resources

Authorizing Sources: Governor's [Executive Directive](#), dated January 20, 2006
RCW [41.04.362](#) State Employee Wellness Program
WAC [292-110-010](#), Use of State Resources
WAC Chapter [296-27-01103](#), Determination of Work Relatedness
DSHS Administrative Policy [13.08](#), Purchased Goods & Services
DSHS Administrative Policy [13.10](#), Central Contract Services
DSHS Policy [15.15](#), Use of Electronic Messaging Systems and the Internet.
DSHS Policy [18.18](#), Employees Holding Outside Employment

Effective Date: November 19, 2007

Revised: August 20, 2012

Approved by: Original signed by Glen Christopherson
Senior Director Human Resources

Purpose

This policy describes the Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) commitment to the ongoing health and well-being of its employees through the creation, development and maintenance of a wellness program for DSHS employees.

Background

DSHS encourages employees to engage in regular exercise, maintain a healthy diet, avoid harmful habits, engage in preventive health care, make an effort to reduce the stresses of daily life, and tend to their physical, mental, personal and emotional needs.

These efforts enhance each employee's ability to serve customers, because improved health of employees can result in:

- Improved morale

- Increased productivity
- Lower injury rates
- Decreased absenteeism
- Reduced stress
- Improved recruitment and retention.

Scope

This policy applies to all Department programs and DSHS employees.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

DSHS Headquarters (HQ) Wellness Team: A team of representatives from each DSHS administration appointed by their assistant secretaries or the Secretary's Office, and chaired by the DSHS Wellness Coordinator, designated by the Senior Director, DSHS Human Resources.

DSHS Program Wellness Team: A group of employees supporting the employee wellness program within a single DSHS administration or division.

DSHS Worksite Wellness Team: A group of employees who work in a single DSHS building or set of adjacent buildings, and organize wellness activities for everyone in that location. Teams may be sponsored by the official Safety and Health Committees for each DSHS building or may form independently.

Normal working hours: The assigned core hours customarily worked by an employee, excluding break and lunch periods.

Paid wellness service: Service provided by a person who conducts classes, provides assessments, or leads other wellness-oriented services for DSHS employees for compensation.

Preventive health care: Health care directed towards preventing disease or reducing the severity or consequences of disease.

Preventive health care strategies: Include immunizations, health screening, lifestyle counseling, environmental changes, and following medical advice and procedures reducing risk factors

Physical activities/exercise: Activities involving physical exertion, such as walking, climbing stairs, dancing, tai chi, yoga, running, or jogging.

Physical Activity Declaration: A downloadable form from the DSHS Employee Wellness Website (DSHS [27-052](#)), which must be signed by employees before participating in physical activities/ exercise occurring in DSHS buildings.

Washington Wellness: The statewide employee wellness initiative under the Governor's Executive Directive of January 2006.

Wellness support group: Two or more employees who regularly support one another to reinforce health and wellness behaviors.

Wellness activity: Includes teaching, learning, planning, promoting, or participating in regular exercise, groups, classes or special events associated with health and wellness.

Wellness participant: A department employee involved in a DSHS-sponsored wellness activity or activity within an office facility.

Policy Requirements

A. DSHS Employee Wellness Program Goals

1. This policy establishes the DSHS Employee Wellness Program, rules governing its operations, and the roles and responsibilities of the people who design and implement the program.
2. The DSHS Employee Wellness Program will:
 - a. Promote and encourage health screenings, health risk assessments, and wellness activities for all DSHS employees.
 - b. Encourage and support program and worksite wellness teams and activities throughout DSHS.
 - c. Work cooperatively with the statewide Washington Wellness program.
 - d. Identify models and opportunities for local and DSHS-wide wellness initiatives and activities.
 - e. Identify community partners and state resources in implementing wellness initiatives and activities.
 - f. Freely distribute throughout DSHS information about statewide and internal wellness initiatives, creative programs, and best practices.
 - g. Provide program feedback to the Washington Wellness program.
 - h. Develop objective measures to assess program effectiveness.

B. Use of State Resources for Employee Wellness

1. Employees may use their work computers during normal working hours in support of employee wellness initiatives. Use must comply with Administrative Policy 15.15 Use of State Resources.
2. Approved computer uses for employee wellness include:
 - a. Visiting the Washington Wellness and DSHS Wellness websites.
 - b. Periodically completing a personal Health Resource Assessment (HRA) through the employee's health plan.

- c. Carrying out other DSHS employee wellness activities in support of DSHS programs or local health and wellness committees.
- d. Carrying out other Washington Wellness activities such as the Governor's Health Challenge.

C. Risk Reduction, Liability, and Inclusiveness of Employee Wellness

1. DSHS does not assume liability for injuries that may occur from participation in wellness activities.
2. Employees wishing to participate in physical activities sponsored by DSHS or occurring on DSHS property must sign a Physical Activity Declaration (DSHS [27-052](#)) for each course or event involving physical activity acknowledging they:
 - a. Accept personal risk,
 - b. Have no known disease or condition that prevents their participation,
 - c. Release the department of any and all liability.
3. A copy of the Physical Activity Declaration must be provided to the Employee Wellness representative identified on the form, or to his or her designated representative. The completed forms must be saved for two years after the employee ends participation in the activity.
4. Vendors paid by DSHS funds to provide wellness services to DSHS employees must carry personal liability insurance.
5. Employee participation in the Wellness Program, and all individually identifiable information gathered during the program, must remain confidential.(RCW [41.04.364](#))
6. Whether an employee chooses to participate in the Wellness Program does not impact the employee's job security, promotional opportunities, or other employment rights.
7. Wellness teams develop wellness activities to include employees at various levels of health and fitness, including employees with health conditions that limit their day-to-day activities.

D. Funding, Authorized Expenditures and Contracting for Employee Wellness Services

1. Wellness activities do not require DSHS-agency contracts if they meet all of the following conditions:
 - a. Take place in DSHS facilities,
 - b. Are developed by DSHS employees,
 - c. Occur during non-work time, and
 - d. Are paid for by the participants directly
2. If the above wellness activities involve physical activity/exercise, they require Physical Activity Declarations (DSHS [27-052](#)) as specified in C-2 above.

3. If the wellness activity is provided by a DSHS employee for compensation, that person must regard that activity as “outside employment” in accordance with DSHS Administrative Policy [18.18](#), Employees holding outside employment.
4. Wellness activities officially sponsored by DSHS **and** paid for by agency funds must comply with the Ethics Law and with relevant state laws, DSHS policies, and DSHS regulations for purchase of goods and services and outside employment.
5. Funding for wellness activities may come from participant payments, grants, donations, DSHS-authorized fund raising activities, agency budgets, and the Industrial Insurance Retrospective Rating Program.
6. Authorized expenditures for Wellness Program activities include:
 - a. Awards to promote participation.
 - b. Honoraria or gifts of not more than \$50 in lieu of contractor fees to persons who are not DSHS employees.
 - c. Wellness products and services from the Health Care Authority
 - d. Contractor fees for wellness services.
 - e. Educational materials, such as wellness-related DVDs, games and literature.

E. DSHS Employee Wellness Program Roles and Responsibilities

1. The DSHS Secretary designated the Senior Director, DSHS Human Resources as the Executive Sponsor. The DSHS Employee Wellness Executive Sponsor:
 - a. Makes DSHS executive decisions on wellness-related issues and policies.
 - b. Seeks input from the DSHS Executive Leadership Team.
2. The DSHS Employee Wellness Coordinator:
 - a. Is appointed by the Senior Director, DSHS Human Resources.
 - b. Represents DSHS on the Washington Wellness Coordinators Group.
 - c. Serves as communication and organizational liaison between the Washington Wellness program and the agency.
 - d. Chairs the DSHS HQ Wellness Team.
 - b. Coordinates DSHS wellness activities through the DSHS HQ Wellness Team.
 - c. Works within DSHS to enable, support and encourage staff to develop worksite wellness teams in each DSHS building.
3. DSHS HQ Wellness Team members must:
 - a. Lend statewide leadership, expertise and support to educate department employees on evidence-based healthy lifestyle models and on wellness-related programs and activities.
 - b. Design and organize communications to inform employees of state, DSHS, program and worksite wellness-related programs and activities.
 - c. Organize wellness teams or other structures for sponsoring wellness within their programs, if they represent programs.

4. Worksite Wellness Teams are encouraged in DSHS buildings. If these teams develop, they may assume responsibility for communication and sponsorship of building-level wellness activities, particularly in those buildings that involve several DSHS programs. A building-level appointing authority must approve the creation and makeup of those teams.
5. DSHS Program or Worksite Wellness Teams sponsoring wellness activities must:
 - a. Ensure compliance with state personal and purchased service contracting guidelines, when department funds are used to contract for paid wellness services.
 - b. Ensure compliance with Parts B, C and D of this policy for activities they sponsor.
 - c. Ensure prior approval is obtained from an appointing authority for wellness activities planned during normal working hours.
 - d. Inform the program wellness representative or the DSHS Wellness Coordinator of the wellness events or activities they sponsor.
 - e. Ensure that each participant in wellness activities involving physical activity/exercise signs a Physical Activity Declaration (DSHS [27-052](#)), and send that declaration to the appropriate program representative.

For more information regarding the DSHS Wellness Program please visit, <http://hrd.dshs.wa.gov/Employees/wellness/Wellness.htm>.