

STH™: Committed to the Health of our Community Through Individualized Care and Prevention

Executive Summary: STH (Steps Toward Health) Employee Wellness Program

STH is a comprehensive employee wellness program developed by Naturopathic Physicians to focus on health, fitness, nutrition, primary care, and prevention of illness and disease for local businesses, their employees and families. STH™ is intended to be a flexible, creative, low-cost program that is easy to implement, sustain, and expand.

Major Elements: STH™ Program

- **Family Clinical Services**
 - Partnership with Naturopathic Physicians and other Healthcare and Wellness Practitioners to provide clinical services to the community that makes up your small business.
 - Primary care health services at reduced visit rates for cash patients or direct in-network billing to insurers.
 - Well-child and well-adult visits providing individual health counseling and education detailing individual and family risk factors
 - Preventive visits to reduce the progression to family medical conditions and other chronic disease
- **Naturopathic Nutrition**
 - Use of Naturopathic Nutrition to lower the risk of chronic illness including obesity and diabetes
 - Educational programs (evening discussions, group seminars and workshops) to assist employees in making, and feeling good about, healthy food choices
 - Facilitate parental involvement through family educational programs
 - Integration of nutrition education through flyers/media in employee areas
- **Employer, Employee, and Family Health and Fitness**
 - Introductory program to encourage everyone involved in your small business to get moving by recording at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week
 - Tracking individual and aggregate outcomes to monitor and report success in achieving individual and community goals. Results will be reported using an established metric, such as body mass index (BMI), hip-to-waist ratio and impedance readings

Program Details: STH™ Program

• Family Clinical Services

The mission of the STH™ Program is the creation of clinical services within the small business itself. The STH™ services will be provided by Naturopathic Physicians and other healthcare and wellness providers committed to the program.

The Program will provide health care to the employers, employees and families of your small business in the following areas:

- Primary care services
- Providing a Naturopathic approach to common health concerns including allergies, asthma, diabetes, weight loss, and others
- Education and guidance in healthy eating habits and weight control
- Stress management, coping skills, and individual screening for mental well-being
- Screening and physical exams which may include nutrition, and support in providing mental health assessments, immunizations, and sports physicals for children

Naturopathic Physicians receive extensive training in diet and lifestyle modification and non-toxic, evidence based therapies such as botanical medicine, homeopathy, and nutrient therapy. The Naturopathic approach emphasizes healthy personal choices. Therefore, providing the proper education and intervention throughout life is a critical step in preventing the onset of chronic illness.

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• Naturopathic Nutrition

- Establishing links with professionals – such as Naturopathic Physicians – who can provide counseling for nutritional problems, refer families to nutrition services, and plan health promotion activities for employees.
- After school educational sessions designed to involve the whole family in making healthy nutritional choices.

Company Health and Fitness

Modeling Vermont's award winning corporate wellness program – created by Bernie Noe, ND for the Vermont Automobile Dealers Association (VADA) – the STH™ Program focuses on **employers as role-models** by encouraging employers to take charge of their own health and wellness via on-site health screenings, educational tools, and a simple exercise program.

Similar to The VADA Program, STH™ will conduct biometric screenings and health risk assessments for all adults. Employers and employees can receive individualized Health Reports (IHR's) including:

- a cover page explaining what the person is doing well;
- a summary of findings from the screening;
- a summary of preventive screenings;
- comparisons to last year's results;
- three detailed risk pages providing lifestyle change information for the individual's greatest risks; and
- enrollment forms for applicable programs.

After the initial screenings and risk assessments, participants are encouraged to get moving by participating in a 12-week exercise challenge, with the goal of logging at least 150 minutes of exercise per week.

The VADA Wellness Program achieved tremendous results. Based on the participation of 848 employees across the 12-week exercise challenge, the program witnessed:

- a 36 percent decrease in the incidence of high blood pressure;
- a 35 percent decrease in cardiovascular disease risk;
- a 24 percent decrease in high-risk stress;
- a 17 percent decrease in high cholesterol; and
- a 15 percent decrease in obesity.

In addition, the self-reported results were equally powerful:

- 63 percent reported improved energy;
- 50 percent experienced reduced stress;
- 42 percent lost weight;
- 55 percent slept better;
- 55 percent experienced improved mood; and
- 72 percent were motivated to continue walking after the challenge.

Policymakers who are concerned about rising health costs will be heartened to hear that The VADA Wellness Program achieved a **1:21 return on investment**. For every dollar spent, VADA saved \$21 in reduced direct and indirect health costs.

The employers and employees of program companies are also encouraged to participate in an exercise program focusing on completion of at least 30-60 minutes of moderate exercise, 5 days a week. There are numerous ways to motivate participants, and exercise challenges can be creative and fun. STH™ will utilize activity cards, personal tracking charts and other tools for implementing a fun and successful physical fitness challenge program for participants.