

Participating in the CDC's National Healthy Worksite Program

Identifying Needs and Interests

Rolling Hills applied to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Healthy Worksite Program (NHWP) in 2013 because the library director wanted to give the staff a way to adopt or improve healthy lifestyles. Because Rolling Hills' workforce is mostly middle-aged to older, the director felt that it was important to build a strong wellness program to benefit employee health. Before participating in the NHWP, Rolling Hills had done some weight-loss and walking challenges, but it did not have a structured health

Rolling Hills applied principles of implementing a comprehensive health promotion program learned during the NHWP by putting in place a combination of programs, policies, and environmental supports to address multiple areas of employee health.

promotion program to meet the health needs of its employees.

Patsey McGuire, Rolling Hills' comptroller and building manager, led the library's health promotion efforts. She explained that having a health promotion program is a new concept for the library, which has many long-term employees. The average tenure of the library's full-time employees is about

14 years. After participating in the first NHWP training sessions on how to develop a program plan based on employee needs and interests, McGuire recruited two more employees to serve on a voluntary wellness committee.

Rolling Hills named its program "Health Matters." The NHWP encouraged worksites to establish health promotion or wellness committees that represent different sectors and levels of the workforce. The committee helps ensure that all perspectives are represented in program planning and that responsibilities for implementation are shared among multiple people.

One of the first NHWP activities that participating employers completed was a baseline assessment in 2013. The NHWP assessment included employee surveys covering health conditions, healthy

Organization Background

Rolling Hills Consolidated Library

- « Established in 1973
- « Industry: Educational Services
- « Location: St. Joseph, Missouri
- « 35 Employees

Rolling Hills Consolidated Library has an inspiring, community-focused vision: "to provide our community with interesting spaces and high quality opportunities for connection to the world around us through learning, enlightenment, creativity, and enjoyment." Rolling Hills' leaders recognize that their own employees need to be in good health to live and carry out the library's vision. With only 20 full-time and 15 part-time employees, the library's staff has its hands full organizing programs and engaging the community in literacy and learning. The full-time staff includes several employees over age 60, with a median age of about 59.

behaviors, and perceptions about the work environment, as well as biometric screenings. Nearly all of Rolling Hills' full-time employees participated. Like all of the employers participating in the NHWP, Rolling Hills also completed the [CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard](#), a validated organizational tool designed to help employers assess the extent to which they have implemented evidence-based health promotion interventions in their worksites.

Setting Goals

McGuire and the wellness committee used the assessment results to create a health improvement plan with goals supported by specific, measurable, time-bound objectives to help achieve the goals.

- Goal: Nutrition.
 - Objective: Reduce the percentage of employees with high blood pressure by 13%, using on-site blood pressure checks, weight-loss programs, and healthy recipe exchanges.
 - Objective: Reduce the percentage of employees with high cholesterol by 17%, using cooking demonstrations and by providing healthier food and beverage options at staff meetings.
- Goal: Physical activity.
 - Objective: Increase the percentage of employees who engage in physical activity by 17%, using walking programs and on-site physical activity supports.



Program Overview

The wellness committee identified strategies to help achieve the objectives in its health improvement plan. To make their efforts more comprehensive, some strategies were used to achieve multiple objectives (e.g., reductions in the percentage of employees with high blood pressure and of those with high cholesterol). Although the committee did not set an explicit weight-loss objective, the members recognized that blood pressure is related to excess weight and focused some of their strategies on weight loss.

The committee was able to enhance some of its strategies with small incentives, like water bottles and lunch boxes, that reinforced the healthy behaviors being promoted. The committee also added environmental supports in the worksite to make healthier choices easier for employees. McGuire promoted the importance of health and wellness by e-mailing daily tips to Rolling Hills' employees.

Improving Blood Pressure and Cholesterol

The 2013 health assessment showed that more than 40% of Rolling Hills' full-time employees had been told by a health care provider that they had

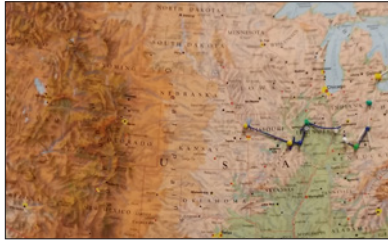
high blood pressure. To help address this problem, Rolling Hills provided a blood pressure monitor with instructions in the breakroom so employees could check their blood pressure at work. The wellness committee also provided tracking cards for employees to use to monitor their blood pressure over time.

To promote better nutrition, the committee organized programs designed to help employees learn about and adopt healthier eating behaviors. It planned healthy cooking demonstrations and recipe sharing that focused on lower-sodium and lower-cholesterol recipes. To promote better eating at work, the committee adopted an informal policy of offering low-sodium and other nutritious food options at meetings and other library events that included food.

Because the library is a community space for information sharing, the committee also has worked to add healthy eating information to relevant community group meetings held at the library to benefit Rolling Hills' employees and community residents. For example, library staff started sharing recipes and ideas with a gluten-free group that meets monthly at the library.

Encouraging Physical Activity One Step at a Time

The wellness committee tried to increase employee physical activity by promoting regular walking groups. To get the groups started, the committee set up a schedule



Map posted in the employee breakroom used to track progress toward walking challenge destinations. Photo provided by Rolling Hills Library.

of days and times that people can meet at local facilities, parks, or the area around the library to walk. The committee also organized several walks of 6-8 weeks to virtual destinations. The committee picked destinations hundreds of miles away, and participating employees tracked their daily steps and progress. To inspire employees, McGuire and the committee provided interesting information about historical figures or places linked to each destination.

One walk drew seven employees, who first walked to The Breakers, a historic mansion in Newport, Rhode Island, then to Hartford, Connecticut, to reach The Mark Twain House and Museum—a must-stop location on every librarian's virtual walking itinerary. Employees marked their weekly progress by placing a pin on a large map in the employee breakroom. Once they had collectively reached the destination, employees usually celebrated by having dinner together at a restaurant with a relevant menu. For example, a long walk to the Chinatown neighborhood in San Francisco ended with a group dinner at an Asian restaurant. McGuire estimated that about one-third of Rolling Hills' employees have

"It is so hard to make time to exercise. Having equipment and support at the office makes that so much easier!"

—Rolling Hills employee

Program Success

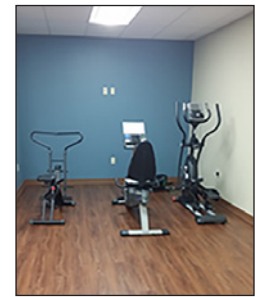
After it finished the NHWP in 2015, Rolling Hills completed the CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard again as part of its follow-up assessment. The library increased its total ScoreCard score from 56 to 138 out of a

possible 264 points. It made improvements in several areas, including its use of evidence-based strategies for nutrition, physical activity, cholesterol, high blood pressure, and weight management.

Environmental Supports for Exercise

Early in the NHWP program, the committee set up a "wellness box" of items that employee can use to incorporate physical activity into the workday. The box has small weights, exercise bands for strength training, and fitness DVDs. To encourage more activity during good weather, Rolling Hills also installed a bike rack outside the library for employees and community members.

When the library did a follow-up health assessment in 2015, 56% of employees said they were interested in on-site fitness opportunities. Rolling Hills had already planned to add an employee fitness area with an elliptical machine, stationary bike, treadmill, dressing room, and shower as part of a larger library remodeling project. Rolling Hills' leaders are optimistic that employees will take advantage of the fitness area before work, after work, and during breaks.



Weight management equipment. Photo provided by Rolling Hills Library.

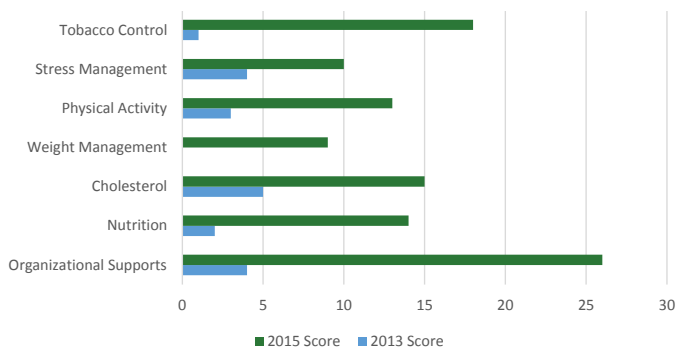
Weight Management

The committee has continued to organize regular weight-management initiatives, like an 8-week "pounds-away challenge" that includes weekly weigh-ins. Participating employees raised the stakes by chipping in \$1 each week, with the money going to the weekly winner. They also gave \$5 overall, which was awarded to the person with the highest percentage of weight loss at the end of the competition. About 8-10 employees participated in each challenge during the NHWP. In the 2015 follow-up assessment, 65% of employees said they were interested in weight-management opportunities.

Some examples of the evidence-based strategies Rolling Hills received points for in its 2015 ScoreCard, that it did not have in place originally, include the following:

- Providing environmental supports for recreation or physical activity.
- Providing education, seminars, workshops, or classes on nutrition.
- Providing free or subsidized cholesterol screening, followed by directed feedback and clinical referral when appropriate.
- Making blood pressure monitoring devices available with instructions for employees to conduct their own self-assessments.
- Providing free or subsidized body composition measurement followed by directed feedback and clinical referral when appropriate.

CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard Overall Score in Wellness Programming, 2013-2015



Rolling Hills made the largest gains in its score in the Organizational Supports module, which assesses the extent to which organizations have a foundation in place to support and maintain a workplace health promotion program. The library now has an active wellness committee and an annual budget for wellness activities. It also engages in other health initiatives throughout the community and supports employee participation and volunteer efforts in those initiatives.

In 2013, a total of 19 of the library's 20 full-time employees completed the baseline health assessments. In 2015, a total of 16 employees completed the follow-up assessment, including 13 of the original 19.

2013 Employee Health Issues and Lifestyle Risks Profile (Employees = 19)

Self-Reported Health Assessment Survey	
Health care provider diagnosed high blood pressure	42%
Health care provider diagnosed high cholesterol	32%
Eat at least 5 daily servings of fruits and vegetables	10%
Engage in little or no physical activity	53%
Biometric Screening	
Body Mass Index: % overweight (BMI 25.0-29.9)	37%
Elevated blood pressure (systolic \geq 140 mmHg or diastolic \geq 90 mmHg)	11%
High cholesterol (\geq 240 mg/dL)	21%

2015 Employee Health Issues and Lifestyle Risks Profile (Employees = 16)*

Self-Reported Health Assessment Survey	
Health care provider diagnosed high blood pressure	31%
Health care provider diagnosed high cholesterol	38%
Eat at least 5 daily servings of fruits and vegetables	13%
Engage in little or no physical activity	75%
Biometric Screening	
Body Mass Index: % overweight (BMI 25.0-29.9)	19%
Elevated blood pressure (systolic \geq 140 mmHg or diastolic \geq 90 mmHg)	31%
High cholesterol (\geq 240 mg/dL)	7%

**Percentages include all employees who provided data in 2015, including those who did not complete the 2013 assessments.*

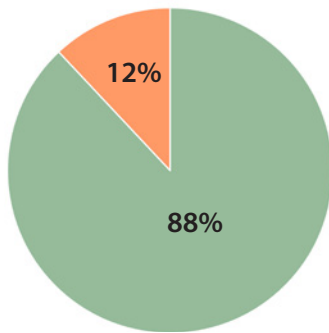
Rolling Hills achieved some, but not all, of its health objectives related to nutrition. When data were analyzed for just the 13 employees who completed both health assessments, the results indicated that these employees had increased their daily fruit and vegetable intake. However, the percentage with high blood pressure increased from 15% in 2013 to 39% in 2015, despite the wellness committee putting blood pressure monitors at the worksite for employees to do

self-checks and providing nutrition education and a weight-loss program. Among the 13 employees who completed both assessments, the percentage with high cholesterol decreased to 8% in 2015 compared to 15% in 2013.

For employees who have been diagnosed with high blood pressure or high cholesterol, keeping those levels in a healthy range usually involves lifestyle changes and taking medication. Increasing the number of employees who comply with their doctor's instructions to be treated with medication increases the number of employees with their conditions under control, reducing the risk for health problems and complications.

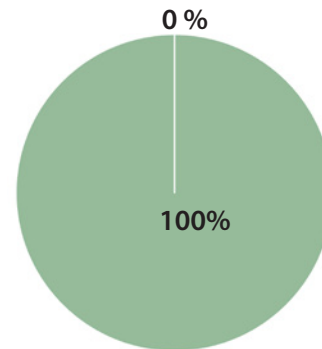
The percentage of Rolling Hills employees treating diagnosed high blood pressure with medication who reported that a health care provider told them they had high blood pressure or high cholesterol and the percentage of those employees who reported that they are currently taking medication to treat the condition. For example, in 2013, 88% of the library's full-time employees who said they had been told by a health care provider that they have high blood pressure, reported that they were currently taking high blood-pressure medication. In 2015, that percentage was 100%. (Note: These percentages are based on small sample sizes.)

Percentage of employees treating diagnosed high blood pressure with medication in 2013



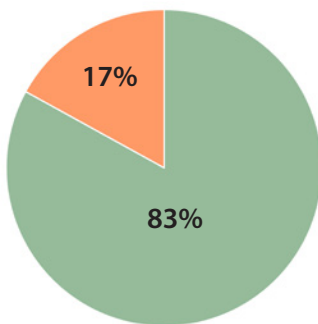
- Diagnosed and currently taking high blood pressure medication
- Diagnosed and not currently taking medications

Percentage of employees treating diagnosed high blood pressure with medication in 2015



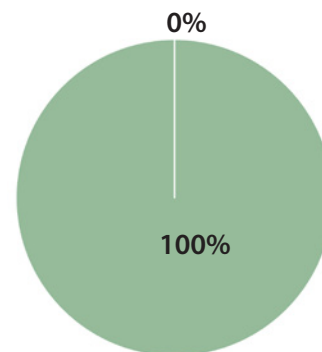
- Diagnosed and currently taking high blood pressure medication
- Diagnosed and not currently taking medications

Percentage of employees treating diagnosed high cholesterol with medication in 2013



- Diagnosed and currently taking high cholesterol medication
- Diagnosed and not currently taking medications

Percentage of employees treating diagnosed high cholesterol with medication in 2015



- Diagnosed and currently taking cholesterol medication
- Diagnosed and not currently taking medications

Rolling Hills made progress toward its physical activity goal of putting programs and environmental changes in place, but it did not achieve its objective of increasing the percentage of employees engaged in more physical activity. To help meet this objective, the wellness committee organized walking programs and offered more environmental supports. McGuire said she has noticed that several employees now wear fitness tracking devices. In 2015, 50% of employees who completed the follow-up assessment agreed that Rolling Hills provided them with the opportunity to be physically active, compared with 37% in 2013. Employees now have more opportunities, and they have expressed more interest; the bigger challenge has been getting behavior to change.

One of the benefits of a small worksite is that Rolling Hills was able to get health promotion activities moving quickly, even with limited resources. With

a small staff, feedback was almost immediate from nearly all employees.

This feedback allowed the wellness committee to diversify its efforts to include multiple health issues and to build programs and environmental changes around these issues. The committee identified inexpensive activities, like walking, that most employees could join. The committee also worked to make the activities enjoyable by encouraging friendly competition and holding team-building celebrations. It worked with local businesses to get small incentives at no cost. The addition of the fitness center was a well-timed stroke of luck, although it was not available until after the 2015 assessment.

"Having an employer that cares about our health helps with employee morale."

—Rolling Hills employee

Challenges

The library had a change in leadership during the first year of the NHWP. The new director had several new initiatives that were higher priority to the main function of the library than the employee wellness program. In a small organization like Rolling Hills, most employees have to wear multiple hats and address several competing priorities, making it difficult to devote time to developing and participating in wellness activities. Missed time due to personal and family illnesses among the wellness committee members also pulled some of the potential energy and time away from the health promotion program.

Most full-time employees at Rolling Hills are older, and the committee has found it challenging to increase physical activity levels among the staff. The committee developed enjoyable activities to encourage coworkers to support each other and get involved, but it has yet to succeed in getting the

group to increase its physical activity. The percentage of employees who are overweight has fallen from 36.8% in 2013 to 18.8% in 2015, but the percentage who are obese has not decreased. The committee plans to continue to try different physical activity and weight-management strategies.

"Having the support of CDC's National Healthy Worksite Program and other local employers who participated, provided us amazing coaches [and] data to know where we needed improvement as well as gave us great ideas, which helped all of us get on track and stay there."

—Patsey McGuire, comptroller and building manager, Rolling Hills Consolidated Library

What's Next?

The Rolling Hills wellness committee plans to conduct focus groups with employees to learn what they liked and what they want to keep from the Health Matters program. One of its priorities will be to get more employees comfortable using the on-site fitness center. The committee is looking into having the library offer affordable classes taught by staff from a local hospital on topics such as healthy cooking and fitness. Rolling Hills is also hoping to network with other local businesses that have set up their own wellness programs, to share strategies for overcoming obstacles and to find innovative, affordable ideas to keep the program fresh.



The National Healthy Worksite Program was designed to help employers put into action science- and practice-based disease-prevention and wellness strategies that would lead to specific measurable health outcomes to reduce chronic disease rates. From 2013-2015, each participant received support, training, and technical assistance to put in place a combination of program, policy, and environmental interventions to support physical activity, good nutrition, and tobacco-use cessation.