

Worksite Wellness Intervention in Mason County

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Abstract: Because of the significant time individuals spend at work, worksites provide an opportunity in addressing health behavior. Employers are in a position to positively influence employee's health behavior through workplace programs and policies.

The panel will describe the American Cancer Society, Great West Division (ACS, GWD) HealthLinks program and the evaluation efforts associated with the program. Funded through the Department of Health Tobacco Prevention and Control Program as a pilot project, HealthLinks delivers free worksite-based health promotion services in Mason County, WA. HealthLinks is specifically designed for small-medium size employers (15-250 employees) with low-waged, underinsured workers and those with less access to health promotion information (relative to larger employers). HealthLinks provides employers with services and technical assistance that are focused on organizational assessment, physical activity, nutrition and tobacco cessation and policy. Experience has shown that providing employers with comprehensive wellness services helps to address an underlying cause of health problems – tobacco use – and benefits both the employer and employee. ACS, GWD has partnered with the Health Promotion Research Center at the University of Washington, School of Public Health to determine the impact of HealthLinks on employer practices and employee participation in workplace health promotion programs.

The panel will discuss why Mason County was selected as a pilot site and explain the small-medium size employers-focus of the program. ACS HealthLinks staff will detail employer outreach efforts and describe specific HealthLinks activities and services. Health Promotion Research Center staff will outline current and future evaluation efforts. All panelists will share the successes, challenges and future opportunities of the HealthLinks intervention model.