

Working *on* Wellness

Supporting healthier people, workplaces and communities.

A HealthyMass Initiative

Case Study

Organization: Massachusetts Department of Correction

Location: 5 targeted locations throughout Massachusetts

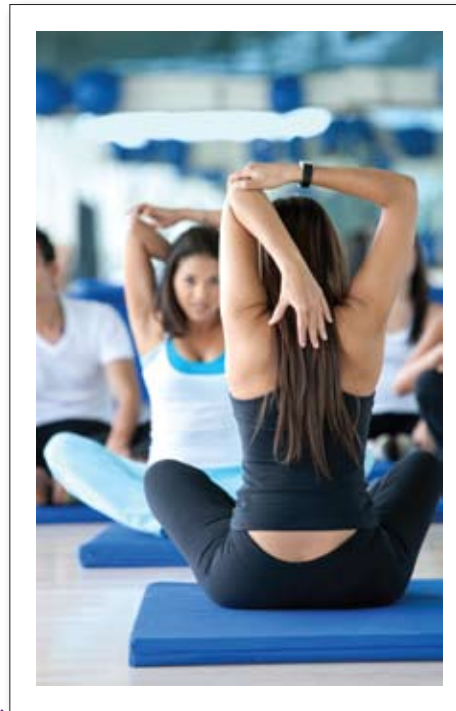
Employees: 1,500 employees out of a total 5,000 workforce

Business Type: Government Public Service Agency

In their non-stop environment, Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) employees don't have much time away from their daily responsibilities, which include the care and custody of over 11,000 incarcerated prisoners. These hectic days leave little time for employee health.

The DOC joined the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Working on Wellness program to improve the health of its workforce, forming a Wellness Committee to help lead the way. Employees completed an electronic survey which showed three major health needs and interests: heart disease, diabetes, and anxiety. Based on this feedback, the Committee set three objectives: improve morale, increase awareness of good nutrition and health benefits, and increase physical activity.

The Committee hosted a Wellness Expo to educate employees on the importance of healthy choices. Two hundred



Improvements in education and access help DOC employees enjoy healthier lifestyles.

employees participated, and 30 community businesses provided information and resources such

as screenings, ask-a-nutritionist, reiki, yoga, and massages. In addition, an intranet page with links to health resources and an e-learning module on physical activity were made available to all employees to help them learn more about being active and eating better.

There are already several outcomes of the program, including better collaboration between the Wellness Committee and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Instead of focusing mainly on reactive responses such as crisis management, EAP is now identifying preventative education and awareness programs to offer the workforce. In addition, membership and use of DOC's two fitness centers is steadily increasing.

The DOC is helping to show that taking small steps, delivering educational materials, and creating a supportive environment is the basis for a program that will sustain over time.

