

Working *on Wellness*

Supporting healthier people, workplaces and communities.

A HealthyMass Initiative

Case Study

Organization: Massachusetts Hospital Association

Location: Burlington, MA

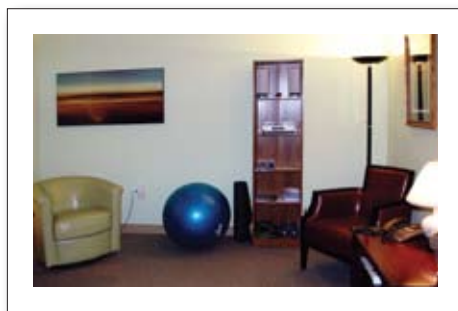
Employees: 45

Business Type: Non-Profit

At the Massachusetts Hospital Association (MHA), a non-profit organization aimed at improving the lives of Mass. residents, health is a regular topic of conversation. For MHA, improving health starts with creating a culture of health for their 45 employees.

In 2008, MHA employees formed the Healthy Eating Active Living In A Greener Work Environment Committee – HEALING. In 2009 MHA participated in DPH's "Working on Wellness" Program, and integrated the Working on Wellness work plan with activities already underway. The first step was to conduct a Needs and Interest survey, which found employees were most concerned about high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes, and were interested in health screenings, low impact physical activity and nutritional information.

HEALING used the results to develop several goals and objectives for the program, and started



A "Stress Free Zone" created at the MHA.

by creating a "Stress Free Zone." A conference room was designated, and using donated and new furniture, employees created a private and relaxing place for quiet breaks or breast-feeding during the workday.

The Committee then continued to develop many other programs and policies to encourage healthy lifestyle. They decorated and highlighted the staircase with signs to increase its use by employees, and created a self-sustainable honor bar which sells healthy snacks for \$1.00. The Committee implemented a policy for providing

healthy options at all meetings and events where food is provided, and installed a dishwasher in the break room to encourage employees to bring healthy lunches. In addition, more than a third of employees participated in a weight loss challenge at work, resulting in 57 pounds lost.

The office now has organic produce delivered every week through the World Peas Community Supported Agriculture farm. MHA staff used the produce as inspiration to create a healthy cookbook, sold more than 140 copies, and donated the proceeds to Project Bread.

In early 2011, MHA was awarded the Boston Business Journal's Inaugural Healthiest Employer Award for the small business category. The HEALING Committee continues to encourage living healthy lifestyles by expanding the program, and seeking ways to measure the impact the program is having on improving the health of MHA employees.

