Healthy workplaces: A model for action

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I. Our target population: 'the global workforce'

Most of the world's 2.8 billion workers can benefit from a "healthy workplace" approach, and particularly...

- the 1.9 billion workers who are employed in unhealthy & unsafe working conditions...and that includes 170 million children.
II. Healthy workplaces: a new way of thinking

A comprehensive approach that embraces:

► Traditional & emerging occupational health – minimizing workers' exposure to job-related physical & psychosocial risks

► Health promotion – promoting healthy behaviours among workers, both job- and lifestyle-related

► Enterprise involvement in community – to address broader social & environmental determinants of workers health
Occupational health risks

► 160 million new cases of work-related illness every year

► Occupational risks play a big role in chronic diseases:
  ► 26% CVD & chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
  ► 15% asthma
  ► 10% cancer
  ► 8% injuries
  ► 8% depression
Health promotion: improved workers' health ➔ better performance

Workplace-based initiatives can help support, for instance:

- Smoking cessation
- Obesity control
- Cardiovascular health
- HIV/TB testing & treatment
- Exercise & physical activity
Enterprise community involvement ➔
social & environmental determinants

► Safe/healthy access to work – public transport, carpools, walking, cycling
► Voluntary pollution/waste control & cleanup
► Primary health care measures unavailable through health care services
Healthy workplaces is inspired by the WHO definition of health as:

“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

WHO constitution, signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States and entered into force on 7 April 1948
Paradigm shift

From: Labour approach  
*Occupational health*

To: Public health approach  
*Workers' health*

*Action at workplace*

*Work-related health issues only*

*Work under labour contract*

*Employers' responsibility*

*Negotiation between workers and employers*

*Action to include workers' families & communities*

*Include all health determinants*

*Include all workers* (self-employed, informal workers)

*All stakeholders' responsible*  
(insurance, health & environm. authorities, a.o.)

*Health protection is a non-negotiable*
Increased business awareness

1. The 'right' thing to do: businesses are part of society and ethical/social frameworks

2. The 'legal' thing to do: in our globalized world, businesses that ignore or undermine workers' health are open to litigation and media scrutiny

3. The 'smart' thing to do: businesses that protect workers' health are among the most successful over time
IV. Global policy anchors

- WHO Global Strategy on Occupational health for All, 1996
- ILO Global Strategy 2003 & Promotional Framework
- World Health Assembly *Worker's health: global plan of action* (2007)
V. The 'Healthy Workplaces' model:

*Combining health protection & health promotion*

- Developed by leading occupational health experts out of systematic review of literature

- Peer-reviewed by WHO regions, ILO, other key agencies

- October 2009 workshop involving 56 experts from 22 countries, international worker & employer representatives
VI. A holistic framework for action

1. Action in four realms:
   - Physical work
   - Psychosocial environment
   - Personal health
   - Community involvement

2. A model of continuous improvement
Physical Work Environment
practical examples

► Eliminate a toxic chemical or substitute with less hazardous

► Install machine guards/exhaust ventilation

► Train workers on safe operating procedures

► Personal protective equipment such as respirators or hard hats
Psychosocial Environment
practical examples

- Reallocate work to reduce workload
- Zero tolerance for harassment, bullying, discrimination
- Respect work-family balance
- Recognize and reward good performance
- Meaningful worker input into decisions that affect them
Personal Health Resources Support
practical examples

► provide fitness facilities, classes or equipment for workers;

► provide healthy food choices (e.g., cafeteria)

► put no-smoking policies in place, provide smoking cessation assistance;

► provide information about alcohol and drugs, and employee assistance counseling

As an employer you can create or remove barriers to lifestyle changes!
Enterprise Community Environment practical examples

- Free/affordable Primary health care to workers/family members;

- Literacy education to workers/families;

- Voluntary controls over pollutants released into the air or water;

- Financial support to worthwhile community causes;

- Minimize greenhouse gas emissions.
VII. Crosscutting principles for success

- Leadership engagement
- Involve workers & their representatives
- Do an effective gap analysis
- Learn from others
- Integrate activities
- Evaluate and improve
VIII. Next steps

In line with further implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* for workers' health, collaboration between WHO, member states, collaborating centres, and civil society groups to develop further:

► Practical guidance
► Sector-specific guidance & tools
► Training modules
Thank you for your attention and your kind invitation!