

Workers from multicultural backgrounds encouraged to Get Healthy at Work this Multicultural Health Week

All workers from multicultural backgrounds are encouraged to be active, eat healthy and be smoke free at work this Multicultural Health Week.

Studies show that 96% of working-age Australians had at least one chronic disease risk factor and 72% had multiple risk factors. Research indicates that the greatest disease burdens are tobacco smoking, alcohol misuse, poor diet physical inactivity and unhealthy weight.

This year, Multicultural Health Week focuses on the health of workers urging them to make lifestyle changes, such as eat healthily, increase physical activity and achieve weight loss to help prevent or delay the progression of chronic diseases.

The NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service coordinates Multicultural Health Week for NSW Health as a state-wide activity in partnership with Multicultural Health Services in Local Health Districts across NSW. The supporting partners this year are Get Healthy at Work, the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service and the NSW Multilingual Quitlines.

Mr Peter Todaro, Director of the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service said most workers spend about one third of their lives at their work place. It is only logical that workers from all multicultural backgrounds should start thinking about getting healthy at work.

“Nearly one in three residents of NSW was born overseas and around 1 in 5 speaks a language other than English. The Week reminds everyone from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities there are resources available in their language as well as services that provide help addressing their needs”.

Experts say workplaces that don't promote health and wellness are four times more likely to lose staff within 12 months.

Professor Chris Rissel, Director of the NSW Office of Preventive Health said there are many positive benefits for employers and workers when healthy practices are promoted in the workplace.

“Workers are the most valuable assets to any organisation. By providing employers with services to help them get healthy at work, companies are improving wellbeing and job satisfaction, which can help increase retention rates”.

The new *Get Healthy at Work* is a NSW Government initiative that aims to improve the health of working adults. More information is found on www.gethealthyatwork.com.au. Resources used in the program are also available in Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese.

Professor Rissel adds that outside of the workplace individuals wanting one on one coaching about their weight or physical activity, the *Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service* was available.

“The *Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service* is a free, confidential telephone coaching service which helps people to achieve their health goals regarding healthy eating, being physically active and achieving or maintaining a healthy weight. Brochures are available in Arabic, Chinese, Filipino, Hindi, Sinhalese, Tamil, Vietnamese and English on www.gethealthynsw.com.au.”

Lifestyle risk factors such as smoking can also contribute to time away from work.

Mr David Lester, Manager for NSW Quitline says that there is help for smokers from CALD communities who want to start their journey to quit at home and at work. If workers are healthy, they are happy not only at work but at home with their families.

“Multilingual Quitlines are available in Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and English. Professional Quitline advisors can provide advice 7 days a week about quitting smoking as well as ways to prepare for quitting and for preventing lapse/relapse.”

Resources in language to help smokers quit are available on <http://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/services/campaign/anti-tobacco/multilingual-quitline/multilingual-quitline>.

Multicultural Health Services at Local Health Districts and partner community organisations, Arab Council Australia (ACA), Chinese Community Services Society (CASS), Vietnamese Community in Australia NSW Chapter and Vietnamese-Australian Welfare Association NSW Inc. have organised a number of activities across the state to raise awareness for the week for communities.

This year, a poster and multilingual booklet (Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese and English) with practical tips for workers to get healthy at work, have been produced for distribution for all workers and employers. Multilingual promotional ads in print, radio, television and online will also be available for ethnic media to announce the key messages of Multicultural Health Week 2014.

To download these resources for free, visit www.multiculturalhealthweek.com.

For multilingual health resources, visit www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au.

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