

Assessing the Health Infrastructure of Mississippi's Community Colleges

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Purpose of Study

Assess the current state of worksite health promotion programming

Assess associated resource capacity in community colleges in Mississippi

Why the worksite?



- Community Colleges identified as the worksite in our study
- Full-time employees spend 1/3 of most days working, making worksites an opportune setting to implement health promotions (Olson, 2015)
- Proper programming and appropriate resources has shown to improve workers all around well-being (CDC, 2017)
- Companies that invest in worksite wellness programs can avoid surplus expenses associated with treating chronic diseases and demonstrate a valuable return on investment (ROI) (Wein, 2015; Baicker et al., 2010)



Why a community college setting?

- Spread out among vast number of communities
- May be one of few resources in heavy rural communities
- Good employee health could drive healthier outcomes in surrounding communities as well as provide role model of healthy behavior towards students
- Mississippi community colleges employ more than 8,100 people statewide, and typically fall among the top 5 employers in their respective regions (National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center, 2020)
- More than 75% of community college graduates (who are non-university-bound) enter employment in the Mississippi labor force within a year of graduating (NSPARC, 2020)

Economic Impact of Community Colleges



Mississippi community colleges directly and indirectly generate more than:

- \$2.1 billion in wages and salaries
- \$3.9 billion in state GDP
- \$277 million in state and local tax revenue, through their operations and the students they serve



Methods

- 51-item survey, cover letter, and consent form emailed and physically mailed to all 15 Mississippi community college presidents office address and email address
- **The survey addressed:** employee demographic information, worksite wellness programs, management support for health promotion programs, and campus support for worksite wellness programs
- Institution Presidents were asked to complete the form or delegate to an appropriate campus official
- Two follow-up emails were sent out to help assure higher response rates



Results

- 8 out of 15 community colleges responded to the survey
- Almost 90% reported having a wellness program for faculty and staff
- All responding colleges indicated the presence of cafeterias, and fitness facilities on campus
- Facilities were generally available to both campus and community members
- All reported having sidewalks sufficient to enable safe outdoor health related fitness activities

Results (cont.)

- 75% of the responding colleges had some form of health/wellness committee in place
- Community Colleges were asked about 16 health topics on if any workshops/class/event was given in past 12 months:
 - All topics were covered by at least one community college
 - Nutrition and physical activity were most frequently covered
 - Sleep/fatigue and musculoskeletal disorders were least frequently covered

Limitations

- Cross-sectional design
- Low response rate
- Solely Quantitative data collection



Implications on Health and Economy

- Potential to enhance health, reduce disparities and improve quality of life
- Healthier workforce can reduce state incurred health care costs
- Can result in increased monetary gains for community colleges
- Resources on campuses may be sole resource in some rural communities and presents opportunity of linkage of these resources between college/community
- Opportunities for advocacy efforts to increase funding for community colleges

Conclusions

- Most state community colleges across Mississippi conduct basic health programming structured in place for their employees
- To our knowledge, one of few studies that aimed to identify worksite wellness programming in Mississippi community colleges
- Further research can expand on recognized health/wellness committees and conduct more in-depth findings (i.e. interviews)
- Further research can identify health resources in the surrounding communities, and suggest implications for future linkage of community college/local community resources to benefit community as a whole