



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

May 10, 2016

Dr. Karen Hacker  
Director  
Allegheny County Health Department  
542 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Dr. Hacker:

The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh is committed to expanding our partnership with Live Well Allegheny by becoming a Live Well Workplace. Our mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all. The goals of the Live Well Workplace designation align perfectly with our mission and strategic plan. We strive to promote healthy living among our members and our employees.

The attached outlines our employee wellness program. We have chosen the following action steps as an area of focus for improving our efforts:

- Building, Facilities, Workplace Environment
- Policy Integration
- Health Education, Screening, and Prevention
- Leadership Commitment and Employee Ownership

Please let us know if we have submitted sufficient evidence to earn the Live Well Workplace designation. If you require additional information, please let me know. We look forward to expanding our partnership with Live Well.

Thank you,

Kevin Bolding  
Chief Executive Officer

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## **1. Building, Facilities, Workplace Environment**

As a responsible leader in healthy living, the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh is eliminating all carbonated beverages from our vending machines. This process will help to insure healthy choices for staff, YMCA members and their families while using our facilities. Additionally, we have selected beverages with lower sugar and calorie content. While we have addressed beverages, we still have to implement standards for healthy snacks in our vending machines.

Our branches offer access to cardio and strength equipment, safe walking trails and fitness classes. Three of our branches have filtered water stations, and the rest have either water fountains or coolers. All of our campuses are smoke-free and are marked with “Young lungs at Play” signs. Several of our branches have bike racks.

We have 7 garden locations across the association taken care of by our Director of Urban Gardens. Members, children and employees all help to maintain and harvest these crops. They are used as a food source for underserved communities, in farm stands, employee consumption and teaching purposes. We also have two teaching kitchens.

We have also integrated Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards into our school-aged childcare and camp programs. At the Y, we see ourselves as models for healthy living. We have a responsibility to the families and communities we serve to build lifelong habits in youth. We believe in starting with ourselves and walking the walk toward a healthier future. We recently sent a video of our COO to all employees. He shared his personal journey toward reclaiming health and challenged others to action. We have made great shifts in creating a culture of wellness.

## **2. Policy Integration**

The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh’s comprehensive wellness program includes quarterly healthy living challenges and newsletters; weekly engagement emails; onsite biometric screenings; health risk assessments; an Employee Assistance Program and access to an evidence-based diabetes prevention program and health coaching for lifestyle, disease prevention and management. We also provide all employees with a free gym membership and discounted personal training and dietetic counseling.

The quarterly challenges include “Step to a Better You”; “Healthier Weight in 8”; “Renew, Restore, ReYou”; and “Maintain, Don’t Gain.”

Step to a Better You is a 7-week period focused on reaching a weekly goal of 50,000 steps. It focuses on increasing physical activity and reducing stress. Employees use trackers of their choice including pedometers, phone apps, and wearables to provide accurate data to their wellness champion on a weekly basis. In order to be eligible for the \$200 gift card drawing, participants must have tracked and achieved their weekly average of 50,000 steps.

Healthier Weight in 8 is an 8-week program that covers weight loss/management basics in a group-or web-based format. Through weekly in-person or web-based sessions, participants are required to weigh in and show proficiency in topics covered. Attendance and participation is

required to be eligible for program incentives- in this case a raffle for a weekend getaway for two.

Renew, Restore, ReYou is a four-week stress management challenge that encourages participants to pick one NEW relaxing activity to do weekly. Options include: yoga, tai-chi, coloring, meditation and inspirational reading. Participants are required to track and submit their activities and are eligible for a \$200 gift card raffle.

Maintain Don't Gain focuses on keeping off the average seasonal gain of 10 pounds through the holidays between Thanksgiving and New Year's. The goal is to not gain, but to maintain a healthy weight. Successful participants are entered into a drawing for another weekend getaway.

We offer twice yearly preventive screens at staff development events where all full time staff are paid to go and attended. Every screening is open up to employees and members. Financial incentive is provided on a tiered system dependent on completion of health assessment, biometric screenings or participation in the employee engagement campaigns. These financial incentives help to offset the high-deductible health plan that is comprehensive of medical, dental and eye care. Additionally, we offer new employees 20 PTO days to use at their discretion. That number increases every 5 years by 5 days with a cap of 30 PTO days.

We provide all part-time employees with a YMCA membership. All full-time employees receive a family membership to the YMCA. Due to membership reciprocity, employees now have access to all YMCA's in Pennsylvania. All employees and family members receive 25% off all programs offered by any location as well, including personal training and nutrition counseling. Additionally, during YMCA meetings we offer stretch and activity breaks with music and dancing.

We have a policy for breast-feeding mothers that insures a private, secluded location (not a restroom) where they can pump and store their breastmilk. We also have a zero tolerance rule against smoking on any Y property.

### **3. Health Education, Screening, and Prevention**

Annually, we provide health risk assessments, on-site biometric screenings, flu shots and determine tobacco use status using a Co2 Monitor. We have achieved 98-100% completion rate by tying HSA dollar contributions to the completion of the health risk assessment over the past 4 years. The results of our screenings, assessments and healthcare claims data drive the planning of the employee wellness program. Our quarterly newsletters and emails are intended to support the wellness challenges; promote awareness on healthy living and chronic disease prevention; and highlight employee success stories.

Our EAP program is a benefit to full time employees. All employees can participate in the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program, a year-long lifestyle change program that has been proven to reduce or delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes by 57%. Finally, employees have flexibility to take advantage of our group exercise classes and disease-specific programs like the

Foundations of Parkinson's class and Arthritis-based classes. We are working toward the implementation of healthy meeting food and healthy snack vending policies.

The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh is a charity partner of both the Highmark Walk for A Healthy Community and the Pittsburgh Marathon. We have recruited YMCA employees over the past 4 years to participate in these events.

By sending out bi-weekly reminders to full and part-time staff on tips and tricks to stretching and staying active throughout the day, we promote more active breaks. We attempt to offer pre/post meeting stretch or outside breaks during long meetings. Making everyone aware of the benefit of regular activity helps encourage healthy behaviors. Sending out this information for six months will lead staff through the stages of change and hopefully end in maintenance of this behavior. The meeting activities will continue on past the six months and has no end date. Healthy living directors at each location provide on-going support in healthy living for all employees.

Both our EAP and health insurance carrier offer tobacco cessation, stress management, weight management and chronic disease prevention and management programs. We promote these offerings in addition to our YMCA branch programs. Some branch programs include lunch and learns on stress and nutrition.

Each year we hold awards for each of our engagement programs. Last month we were able to hand out awards to the winners of the step to a better you program. We gave individuals medals and the winning branches received trophies.

#### **4. Leadership Commitment and Employee Ownership**

The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh has been recognized as one of the Pittsburgh Business Times as one of the 2016 Healthiest Employers!

Our Employee Wellness Committee meets monthly and is supported by senior leadership. Within the committee we have Healthy Living Directors, the AVP of Healthy Living and Senior Level HR. Working together we make decisions on new programs and the way they will most effectively be implemented. At the end of each campaign, we collect feedback from the participants and implementers to make continual improvements to our offerings. Annually, we meet with our health plan and physicians to evaluate our claims usage and to break down our health risk assessments and aggregate data. This information informs our wellness committee to customize our employee wellness and engagement program to suit our Association's unique needs.

Senior Management helped to kick off the campaign through a video from our CEO. Senior leaders actively participate in our efforts and encourage friendly competition. Our mission statement is "To put Christian Principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all."