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Director's Buzz

L. CASEY CHOSEWOOD, MD, MPH

Employers are uniquely able to impact the lives of their workers, both in and outside of the workplace. Today, the lines between work and life outside work are not as easily drawn. For many workers, this creates new challenges and conflicts. Our newsletter looks at these conflicts, their impact on well-being, and how *Total Worker Health* (TWH) approaches can help.

Our [Promising Practice](#) describes workplace policies employers and organizations can use to prevent work-life conflict. Our [TWH Exclusive](#) features exciting new research from the National Safety Council. In the exclusive, we examine TWH as one of the concepts shaping safety in the modern workplace. We also highlight a new [Vital Signs article](#) written by NIOSH authors. This article describes alarming new data on the mental health crisis we are seeing in the nation's health workers. A [new NIOSH campaign](#) will provide critical strategies for intervention.

With our partners, we continue to research workplace solutions and share resources to help create positive change. We hope you find these features helpful in your work! We encourage you to connect with us by following [@NIOSH_TWH](#), visiting our [website](#), or emailing us at [NIOSH Total Worker Health \(CDC\)](#)

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Total Worker Health Exclusive

The New Value of Safety and Health in a Changing World

To continue keeping people safe in today's modern workplace, the National Safety Council partnered on a study to redefine safety in 2023. With funding from Lloyd's Register Foundation, and assistance from a panel of experts, NSC initiated this project in 2021. The two-year effort resulted in the report [The New Value of Safety and Health in a Changing World](#).

In the report, NSC identifies organizational concepts shaping modern safety programs that include TWH. By definition, TWH is a holistic approach, so it fits perfectly as one of NSC's three named organizational concepts. These concepts generate broad value and provide a comprehensive approach to safety management.

The organizational concepts are further broken down by theme profiles. Those listed under TWH, for example, include these themes: preventing serious injuries, illnesses, and fatalities; prioritizing mental health; and focusing on psychological safety. They can be understood through their theme profiles. Those involved in business, safety, and policy can use the themes to guide decision-making for best practices, investment decisions, and performance tracking.

The report presents actionable insights and values. It intends to spark conversations, plans, and policy changes. Ultimately, it aims to lead to new safety strategies that improve workplace culture and worker well-being. Find key highlights and recommendations from NSC in the [executive summary](#).

To learn more about the research view the [webinar recording](#) or visit the [NSC website](#). If you're ready to use TWH approaches in your workplace, visit the [TWH website](#) to get started.

Promising Practice

Family-Friendly Workplace Practices: *Early Matters Greater Austin Toolkit*

Editor's Note: This Promising Practices article is part of a [series](#) dedicated to work and family well-being. To learn more about this topic or explore solutions to work-life conflict, consider watching webinars from our TWH Webinar Series: [Navigating Work-Life Boundaries](#) or [Promoting a Sustainable Work-Nonwork Interface](#).

Early Matters Greater Austin (EMGA) is a historic coalition of business leaders in the Austin, Texas, metropolitan area. They focus on strengthening early childhood education to support the future workforce and economy. The [EMGA Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit](#) outlines family-friendly workplace options employers can incorporate into policies, programs, and practices. These options can help support the safety and health of workers and their families by preventing or reducing work-life, or work-family, conflict. Promising practices and their benefits described below serve as a "menu" of family-friendly workplace options:

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Please send your comments and suggestions to us at twh@cdc.gov.

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- **Health Benefits:** Comprehensive health benefits support workers' and their families' physical and financial health, reduces absenteeism, and increases productivity and retention. The toolkit provides details for health insurance, dental and vision, cafeteria plans (or Flexible Spending Accounts), short-term disability insurance, and employee assistance programs.
- **Living Wage:** Workers paid a living wage support families' financial security, improve health outcomes, and reduce turnover. A living wage is defined as pay that covers basic needs like food, housing, healthcare, childcare, education, and transportation.
- **Paid Leave:** Paid leave contributes to workers' and their families' physical and financial health by making it easier for workers to manage work-life responsibilities. For instance, it allows workers time to attend children's appointments and functions without the worry of losing income. Examples include paid time off such as sick leave, vacation leave, and other personal leave.
- **Supporting Workers with Caregiving Responsibilities:** A significant number of workers care for children, while others have the dual responsibility of caring for both children and adults. Elder care and childcare assistance practices can include on-site facilities, backup or emergency care options, vouchers, and targeted benefit plans. These practices help caregivers meet their responsibilities while maintaining effectiveness at work.
- **Flexibility in Location and Hours:** Flexibility around when and where you work, along with supportive managers, promotes work-life harmony. Stable and predictable schedules enable workers to effectively plan for childcare and other life responsibilities.
- **Supportive Services:** Family-friendly supportive services described in the toolkit include support for breastfeeding mothers, like a lockable private room with a comfortable chair, sink, and refrigerator. Additionally, expectant and new parents can benefit from dedicated parking spaces and infant-at-work programs.
- **Career Development Opportunities:** Organizations can offer return-to-work and reentry support. Other offerings could include education programs and certifications (like tuition reimbursement programs), workplace classes (like English at Work), and transportation benefits to enhance family economic security. [Workplace supported recovery programs](#) for people with substance use disorders can also enhance return-to- and stay-at-work efforts.
- **Community Involvement Strategies:** Corporate social responsibility involves investing in the community through options like paid volunteer days, workplace giving, philanthropic activities, and donations to organizations that support families' needs. These efforts may increase social connections among workers and provide a more meaningful work experience.



Photo by ©Getty Images

The toolkit was adapted from the [Colorado Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit](#) and aligns with [TWH fundamentals](#). Discover steps to make family-friendly changes in your workplace on the [Early Matters Greater Austin website](#). Find more tools for planning, evaluation, and assessment on the [NIOSH website](#).

News from NIOSH

CDC Vital Signs Released on Health Workers' Mental Health Crisis

CDC recently released [Vital Signs: Health Worker-Perceived Working Conditions and Symptoms of Poor Mental Health—Quality of Worklife Survey, United States, 2018–2022](#), written by NIOSH authors. This article provides new data showing health workers reported higher levels of poor mental health days, burnout, turnover, and harassment at work in 2022 compared with 2018. Read the article to learn more about the data and strategies to address this crisis.

Help Wanted: Union Members and Labor Representatives

Are you a union member or a labor representative who would like to actively participate with the NIOSH TWH program? The TWH Program would like to expand and enhance its partnerships with organized labor to incorporate TWH

approaches for advancing worker well-being into activities supported by labor organizations. If you'd like to participate or nominate a union member or representative to participate, contact us at twh@cdc.gov.

Recorded Webinars: Continuing Education

Two newly released webinars hosted by the NIOSH TWH Program are now available for on-demand viewing and continuing education credits. In September, we hosted the webinar "Using Participatory Strategies in Healthcare to Improve Support Staff and Security Worker Well-being." In October, we hosted "SMART Work Design for Healthy and Productive Work." Access the recordings and learn how to obtain free continuing education on the [TWH webinar page](#).

Reminder: Resources to Support Workers During the Holiday Season

Retail workers are likely to experience more shift work and longer work hours as the holiday season begins. This [NIOSH publication](#) and [NIOSH Science Blog](#) provide workplace solutions to address fatigue among retail workers during this time of year. Get into the holiday spirit using these TWH approaches in Santa's Workshop, as reported in this [NIOSH Science Blog](#).



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News From the NIOSH Centers of Excellence for TWH

- The [California Labor Lab](#) announced [eight new pilot study projects](#) focused on diverse topics related to TWH. The Lab's research projects have also made significant progress. In May, they concluded the California Work and Health Survey, which revealed important insights on emergent working conditions. In addition, the California Artificial Stone and Silicosis Project published the largest U.S.-based case series of silicosis among engineered stone countertop fabrication workers this past July.
- The [Carolina Center for Healthy Work Design and Worker Well-being](#) is now on social media! Stay current on the latest Carolina Center research, news, and resources! You can subscribe to the Center's [newsletter](#) and follow them on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).
- The [Center for Health, Work & Environment \(CHWE\)](#) recently completed the first round of data collection for a two-year heat-related research project with agricultural workers in Jalisco, Mexico. CHWE partnered with the Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social for this effort, funded by the International Labour Organization's [Vision Zero Fund](#). The [project](#) is a collective action approach aimed to understand and prevent the heat-related health and safety impacts of farm worker in Jalisco. CHWE is also partnering with the [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#) to offer services to healthcare organizations across Colorado through the Center's [Health Links®](#).
- The [Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace \(CPH-NEW\)](#) updated the [Healthy Workplace Participatory Program Toolkit](#) to include [Spanish](#). CPH-NEW used the toolkit to create a program manual for [unions and worker groups](#). The manual aims to help those learning how to lead the worker-centered design process in the [Building TWH Leaders](#) course. In September, CPH-NEW hosted a [TWH Trends Expert Webinar](#) titled [No One Whistles a Symphony: How to Integrate Safety With Operations Management](#).
- *McKnight's Long-Term Care News* featured a study about nursing homes at the [Center for Work, Health, & Well-being](#). The article is titled [Prioritizing Staff Members' Well-being Shown to Alleviate Shortages: Study](#). The study found that homes with leadership who communicated and showed commitment to worker safety, health, and well-being had relatively fewer nurses leave during the study period. In addition, a new pilot project study, "Characterizing Experiences of Workplace Violence Among Hospital Patient Care Employees," was recently funded. It

will use data from the Boston Hospital Workers Health Study.

- The [Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest \(HWC\)](#) released a new [Workplace Matters](#) Titled [Peers in Recovery](#), the podcast features presenter Eric Cohen from Ace Pipe describing an innovative approach to supporting workers in recovery. HWC partners also released other new resources, including the St. Louis Area Business Health Coalition's [podcast](#) and the Nebraska Safety Council's [WellSteps online portal](#).
- The [Johns Hopkins Psychosocial, Organizational, and Environmental Total Worker Health® Center in Mental Health \(POE Center\)](#) held a [Back 2 School Event](#). The event promoted mental health awareness among teachers, parents, and school-aged children in underrepresented communities. Cohosts included the Johns Hopkins Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety and Health in collaboration with local community leader Katrina Randolph.
- The [Oregon Healthy Workforce Center \(OHWC\)](#) Co-Director, Dr. Leslie Hammer, guides the [Center for Supportive Workplaces](#), which recently launched the [Workplace Mental Health Training for Managers](#). This one-hour online course teaches managers tangible skills to support employees' mental health. Another training opportunity launched in May, the [TWH Certificate Program](#), will include updated modules in 2024.
- The [University of Illinois at Chicago \(UIC\) Center for Healthy Work](#) 'sGreater Lawndale Healthy Work project is working with Radical Public Health to organize a community violence forum. Panelists will include UIC faculty involved in social-justice-engaged research along with community representatives. The forum intends to create critical and radical discussion about increased violence against street vendors. [Learn more](#).
- The [Utah Center for Promotion of Work Equity Research \(U-POWER\)](#) recently launched the first track of a research clearinghouse: [resources for employers](#). The clearinghouse collates TWH-related resources for employers, workers, community members, and occupational and public health professionals. U-POWER is also partnering with the Utah Education Association to develop a working group and research briefs to promote policies that shape teacher well-being.

These are just a few of the updates from the NIOSH Centers of Excellence for TWH. To learn more about each of the Centers, visit [their websites](#).

News From NIOSH TWH Affiliates and Partners

Welcoming New Affiliate, Yolo County Public Health

[Yolo County Public Health](#) serves a county of about 220,000 residents. Located between Sacramento and the Bay Area, Yolo County is home to the University of California at Davis. Besides local government and the university, agriculture remains central to the economy of Yolo County. Yolo County Public Health promotes well-being, works to prevent disease and injury, and protects residents and the environment.

Featured Affiliates: Get to Know the NIOSH TWH Affiliates

This feature was created to introduce our readers to current [NIOSH TWH Affiliates](#). See how the NIOSH TWH Affiliates responded when we asked about their work.

[American Physical Therapy Association](#)

What does your organization do?

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) is a membership professional organization, representing 100,000-member physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy. To improve the health of society, we believe every stakeholder in the APTA community has a role to play.

How do you incorporate TWH practices into your work?

APTA's emphasis on employer services has been underscored by two major educational offerings from its components: an Occupational Health Practitioner Certificate of Achievement program, sponsored by the Academy of Orthopaedic Physical Therapy, and a direct-to-employer services designation program offered by APTA Private Practice. The Academy of Orthopaedic Physical Therapy will partner with TWH to elevate programs and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with the promotion of injury and illness-prevention efforts to advance worker well-being.

When did you become a NIOSH TWH Affiliate, and why did you want to join the program?

January 2023. TWH Affiliate Program focuses on expanding an understanding of the importance of worker health and increasing collaboration between employers, providers, and the public. This focus mirror's APTA's mission to transform society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience.

What are you most proud of having accomplished as a NIOSH TWH Affiliate?

Being named a TWH Affiliate is not just an acknowledgment of our commitment to protect and promote worker safety, health, and well-being but also provides an opportunity to work with a wide range of organizations toward shared goals in this important area of health care.

How has being a NIOSH TWH Affiliate helped you in your work?

By elevating the importance of workers' health, we are taking physical therapy beyond traditional models of care. APTA is leveraging our unique skills to promote prevention and well-being in workplaces, guided by our expertise in rehabilitation.

The University of Alabama 

What does your organization do?

The interdisciplinary team at the University of Alabama (UA) conducts research on the organization of work; worker safety, health, and well-being; work capacity; and productivity, especially in hot environments. UA Safe State, part of the College of Engineering, provides consultation and education services for environmental and occupational safety and health challenges.

How do you incorporate TWH practices into your work?

In addition to disseminating research in the areas mentioned above and providing environmental health and safety consulting services, a variety of well-being programs are offered to employees throughout the year as part of the employee wellness program, WellBama.

When did you become a NIOSH TWH Affiliate, and why did you want to join the program?

We became a NIOSH TWH Affiliate in February 2022. A lot of the work that occurs on campus aligns with the principles of TWH, so we wanted to join the TWH Affiliate Program to solidify a formal partnership.

New Publications and Resources

From CDC and NIOSH

- [Clearing Up Myths About Older Workers While Understanding and Supporting an Aging Workforce](#)
- [Mental Health, Alcohol Use, and Substance Use Resources for Workers and Employers](#)
- [Vital Signs: Health Worker Perceived Working Conditions and Symptoms of Poor Mental Health—Quality of Worklife Survey, United States, 2018–2022](#)

From Our Partners

- [A Spanish Translation of Zohar and Luria's Safety Climate Scale and a Test of Measurement Equivalence](#) 
- [City of Chicago Tipped Worker Report](#)  
- [Dissemination and Evaluation of an Opioid Hazard Awareness Training for Stone, Sand, and Gravel Miners](#) 
- [Managing Psychosocial Risk in the Workplace: It's Time for Progress](#) 
- [Occurrence of Occupational Injuries and Within Day Changes in Wet Bulb Temperature Among Sugarcane Harvesters](#) 
- [Silicosis Among Immigrant Engineered Stone \(Quartz\) Countertop Fabrication Workers in California](#) 
- [The Stealthy Thief: Manifestations of Indirect Wage Theft and Lived Examples](#) 
- [The Complex Reality of the California Labor Market: Untangling the Issues](#) 

Conferences, Webinars, and Training

November

12 – The UIC Center for Healthy Work will host a 2023–2024 [Labor Film Series](#) in partnership with Chicago Jobs with Justice. The film, "Nae Pasaran," begins at 6 p.m. (CT). For more information about this event and future film screenings, email healthywork@uic.edu.

12-15 – Join the [American Public Health Association's Annual Meeting](#) to hear about the latest research from the Centers of Excellence.

16 – Register for the Health Links webinar, [Health@Work: Supporting Workers with Chronic Conditions](#), at 1 p.m. (ET). Learn more about how to support workers with chronic conditions at your workplace.

29 – Researchers from the OHWC will present on "TWH Awareness for Safety Committees." The session is part of the in Portland.

December

4 – Harvard Center Co-Director Dr. Erika Sabbath will present Work-related Health and Wellbeing of U.S. Obstetrician-gynecologists: Impacts of Post-*Dobbs* State Abortion Bans at 1 p.m. (ET). Stay tuned to the [seminar calendar](#) for more information.

4-5 – Dr. Chosewood will present at the [Recovery Ready Workplace New York Symposium](#).

January

10 – The [Nebraska Safety Council](#) will host [Reversing Pre-Diabetes in the Workplace](#) as part of the monthly [WorkWell Networking and Training Series](#).

Looking for more? You can find more events on the [NIOSH Conferences, Meetings, Webinars, and Events](#) webpage and the [Society for TWH Events](#) page.

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