

FINAL REPORT:

Worklife Center for Excellence Iowa Stakeholder Conference

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List of Terms and Abbreviations:

HWCE	Healthier Workforce Center for Excellence
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
EAC	External Advisory committee

Abstract

On October 22, 2008, The UI College of Public Health, Healthier Workforce Center for Excellence held an all day conference in Iowa City, IA titled, “*A Healthier Workforce: Perspectives for Iowa and the Nation.*” The conference gathered professionals from the private, public, and academic sectors that are concerned with workplace health promotion and health protection. The conference featured presentations by the center director, the interim director of NIOSH, and panel discussions with academicians from two other centers funded by the NIOSH WorkLife Initiative and national leaders in worklife. The conference met its goals and was a successful gathering.

Introduction

In 2006 The University of Iowa College of Public Health started the Healthier Workforce Center for Excellence with funds from the NIOSH WorkLife Initiative. The mission of the HWCE is to improve the health of workers in Iowa and nationally through integrated wellness and ergonomic research, collaboration with peer institutions, and dissemination of successful interventions. The third goal of the HWCE is “to serve as a state and national information, education and policy resource for employee health programs, employee health services and employee health policy.

After laying the groundwork with the HWCE’s research projects in the first year and a half of the center, the next step was to host a statewide conference. This conference brought together the other two NIOSH-funded centers, our External Advisory Committee, and local business leaders and stakeholders to begin to address the center’s third goal.

Conference

The conference featured presentations by HWCE faculty, EAC members, and stakeholders including presentations by small employers and union representatives. The following is a list of topics and speakers that were covered at the meeting:

- *Welcome and Statement of Conference Goals*, James Merchant, MD, DrPH, UI College of Public Health
- *NIOSH Worklife Initiative* – Christine Branche, PhD Interim Director, NIOSH

- *Panel on Worklife National Priorities* - Glorian Sorensen, PhD, Harvard University, Laura Punnett, PhD, University of Massachusetts-Lowell, James Merchant, MD, DrPH
- *National Panel on Integrated Employer Health Care Programs* – Laura Welch, MD, CPWR, the Center for Construction Research and Training, Wayne Lednar, MD, DuPont, Michael Parkinson, MD, American College of Preventive Medicine
- *Healthcare Plans for Small Businesses and Families* – State Senator Jack Hatch
- *2007 Iowa Employer Benefits Study* – David Lind, David Lind & Associates
- *Iowa Insurer Employer Health Care Program Panel* – Jerry Ripperger, Principal Financial Group, Lew Sandy, MD, United Healthcare, Rick Miller, MD, Wellmark BC &BS
- *Iowa Employer-Employee Healthcare Panel* – Laura Jackson, Wellmark, Sarah Swisher, SEIU Local 199, Polly Heinen, Principal Financial Group
- *Integrated Health Services* – Martin Sepulveda, MD, IBM Corporation

The meeting was attended by approximately 100 people from eastern Iowa including employers in manufacturing, service and agricultural sectors, human resource specialists, healthcare workers, organized labor representatives, public health students and insurance company representatives. Also, leaders in the NIOSH Worklife Initiative were included in our speaker list and the panel composition provided a successful format for discussion amongst the speakers and the registrants.

The conference was recorded using a web-conferencing system and is available on our website (<http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/hwce/resources/recordings.html>) for free so that employers and stakeholders that were unable to travel to Iowa City could watch the proceedings. Similarly, the recording link was sent to Iowa employers, via the Labor Center to Iowa labor unions, and to other NIOSH and WorkLife Initiative Centers.

External Advisory Committee Meeting

The HWCE has a very strong, diverse and complementary EAC with which Center investigators met in 2007. The center used the conference, *A Healthier Workforce: Perspectives for Iowa and the Nation*, to engage our EAC, the other two WorkLife Center directors, Dr. Greg Wagner from NIOSH, and Dr. Christine Branche, the interim director of NIOSH. The ability to host a statewide conference allowed us to attract more of our EAC members to engage them in the conference and the HWCE.

Our EAC members attended the conference and were actively involved as speakers or panelists. After the conference, the HWCE held a half-day meeting with our EAC and the directors of the other two centers funded by the NIOSH WorkLife Initiative. This meeting was very valuable because it allowed HWCE researchers to present their ongoing research to the EAC and for the center to solicit recommendations. The EAC's

two main recommendations were: 1) the HWCE should focus on the state of Iowa and on small employers who are largely representative of Iowa (and US) employers, and 2) that the HWCE work with the NIOSH WorkLife Initiative and other center directors to develop a NIOSH WorkLife Initiative Workshop to address WorkLife Center collaboration. In 2009 a NIOSH WorkLife Program Workshop took place in Boston, MA between the three centers and NIOSH.