

## The Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest: Theoretically and Data Driven

*Shelly Campo (University of Iowa)*

Employers need to reduce the burden of higher healthcare costs and lost productivity on their businesses caused by injuries and illnesses. Therefore, the goal of the Outreach Core of the Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest (HWC) is to change Total Worker Health® (TWH) knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviors by translating research findings into tools for employers to use to create a healthier, safer workplace. Evidence-based social science, utilizing communication and health behavior change theories, drive the development, implementation, and evaluation of all outreach activities. Theories point to how and why change may occur which enhances evaluation efforts to measure impacts. Each theory provides different insight into aspects such as adoption, readiness for change, planning models, levels of influence, and message design to reach culturally- and educationally-diverse audiences. The theory is coupled with data collected from employers and employees by the HWC including site visits, case studies, and surveys of Midwest employers to inform the dissemination of Total Worker Health programs, policies, and practices. This evidence base is used to develop communication strategies that are tailored to the needs of specific audiences, including employers, intermediaries, and academics, that are delivered via the appropriate interpersonal and media channels. Our research with smaller employers (<250 employees) identified the need for low cost, easy to implement TWH solutions. These employers are far less likely to have skilled staff members whose primary focus is health and safety. As a result, they have less knowledge and time to learn about new resources and would like to know that other small employers have successfully adopted TWH and suggestions about implementations strategies for TWH programs, policies, and practices. This has driven our approach to provide education in smaller doses via short videos (most less than 5 minutes) and podcasts, provide testimonials and examples from Midwest employers, and create more engaging content such as a hazard mapping exercise to employ at local meetings/conferences. The HWC is uniquely positioned at the University of Iowa along with several other NIOSH-funded centers including the Heartland Center for Occupational Health and Safety (the Federal Region VII Education and Research Center), and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (serving nine states of the Upper Midwest). Since its inception, the HWC has collaborated with the Heartland Center and Great Plains Center to develop TWH programs and materials that are jointly disseminated throughout the Midwest. Another dissemination strategy for the outreach core is to reach employers throughout the four-state region (Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and Kansas) by partnering with intermediaries to disseminate TWH. Washington University in St. Louis and the Nebraska Safety Council/WorkWell, bring together an interdisciplinary team of researchers, practitioners, and advisors who are an integral part of the Outreach team. The HWC has worked closely for the past five years with the Nebraska Safety Council/Workwell, a NIOSH TWH Affiliate, which reaches over 550 Nebraska employers with TWH education and resources. Their expertise and networks are an essential part of our Outreach core. Their team has enhanced our ability to design, implement, and evaluate programs, practices, and policies that can be tailored to employers of various sizes with changing needs and high burdens of adverse health effects, particularly the needs of small employers in our states. We have recently developed a new relationship with WorkWell Kansas to incorporate TWH into their training and

resources. WorkWellKS provides leadership and resources for business and organizations to support worksite health. Since its inception in 2011, WorkWellKS has worked with 1,123 worksites across Kansas. The HWC is also actively engaging trainees in TWH approaches including an upcoming case competition for undergraduate, graduate and professional student teams that requires them to work with a Midwest community to provide expertise in solving community and workplace issues from a TWH perspective. These teams will include students from health sciences, management programs, urban and regional planning, and engineering among others. Through the integration of theoretically based approaches, data collections, and collaborations with organizations throughout our region, we are able to expand the outreach efforts of the HWC.

## The Center for Work, Health, and Well-being: Four Pillars of Our Approach

*Lisa Burke (Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Harvard University)*

The mission of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Center for Work, Health, & Well-being, one of six Total Worker Health® Centers of Excellence, is to protect and promote the health, safety, and well-being of workers through designing, implementing, and disseminating effective workplace policies, programs, and practices. Over the past 20 years, researchers at our Center have endeavored to expand the evidence supporting an integrated approach and to develop the resources to apply it. The Center's approach to outreach and education is comprised of four pillars: Disseminating Evidence-Based Practices The Center creates best practices to simultaneously improve working conditions and optimize health and safety investments in multiple industries. The Center's Workplace Integrated Safety and Health (WISH) Assessment measures effective workplace organizational policies, programs, and practices, and focuses on working conditions and organizational facilitators of worker safety, health, and well-being. The WISH Assessment is based on the Center's validated "Indicators of Integration" that were designed to assess the extent to which an organization has implemented an approach integrating occupational safety and health with worksite health promotion. The WISH assessment measures six core constructs identified as central to best practices and may inform organizational priority setting and guide research around causal pathways influencing implementation and outcomes related to these approaches. Several Center studies are utilizing WISH Assessment items, testing their psychometric properties. Shaping Workplace and Public Policy To inform policy decisions affecting the workforce, the Center examines the potential impact its research has on policies that enhance worker health and safety while supporting productivity and engagement. Our Center's Policy Working Group identifies, examines, and influences workplace and public policy issues related to Total Worker Health® by bringing together policy experts to explore implications of our past and current research. These experts recommend changes to workplace and public policies that can improve worker health, safety, and well-being. In addition, as part of our evaluation process, we examine how the research findings published by the Center can inform policy decision makers. The Center has also created "Policy Implication Summary Sheets" based on recent publications and written for non-academic audiences. These convey key messages from our research in non-academic language, for use at Conferences and available on the Center's website. Building Organizational Capacity to Improve the Conditions of Work To support organizations in adopting an integrated approach, the Center trains professionals, presents at conferences and on webinars,

and mentors students and post-docs. These efforts are based on the Center's conceptual framework targeting the conditions of work, including physical environment, organization of work, psychosocial factors, and job tasks & demands. The Center's "Guidelines for Implementing an Integrated Approach" provides organizations with a framework for implementing a TWH integrated approach to worker safety, health, and well-being, as well as strategies, organizational processes, tools and links to other resources. The Center's capacity building suite is based on the Guidelines and its accompanying tools and resources. The Center regularly offers an Executive and Continuing Professional Education course, "Work, Health, and Well-being: Framework, Evidence, and Applications", and has recently participated in the design and delivery of a Harvard EdX MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on the Culture of Health. Basing It upon the Center's Groundbreaking Research The foundation of our Center's work continues to be groundbreaking research. The Center's research projects and initiatives study the effectiveness of workplace policies and practices designed to support and protect workers; and demonstrate how an integrated approach targeting working conditions improves outcomes for employees and organizations. We currently are involved in three primary research projects – in Healthcare, Construction and Nursing Homes. Among the other Center projects is a collaboration with the Boston Fire Department and the Boston Firefighters Local 718, which has provided opportunities for the Center to examine factors in fire stations that may be impacting firefighter cancer risk. Pilot study findings were published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* and then translated for a non-academic audience and published in *Firehouse Magazine*, a firefighter trade publication.

### Center for Health, Work and Environment

*Liliana Tenney (University of Colorado Denver)*

Promoting Total Worker Health® (TWH) to organizations and individuals requires a translation and dissemination strategy that is targeted and engaging. The Center for Health, Work & Environment at the Colorado School of Public Health focuses translation and dissemination strategies aimed at reaching employers, specifically small and mid-sized employers, to build a culture of health and safety in the workplace. The end goal is increasing the awareness, adoption, and implementation of TWH among small employers. Generally small businesses, defined by the Small Business Administration of firms with less than 500 employees, do not offer the same level of health protection, health promotion, employee benefits, and wages found in larger organizations. Research confirms that there is low adherence to traditional occupational safety and health best practices by smaller organizations. Despite the observation that 93% of surveyed small business owners report that the health of their employees is important to their bottom line, the real and perceived barriers experienced by these organizations pose real challenges to making changes that improve worker health, safety and well-being. Engaging small organizations depends largely on how they receive the information and their stage of "readiness to change". To promote participation and awareness of TWH, we apply the RE-AIM (reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation and maintenance) framework for translation and dissemination. Our Center focuses on reaching small employers to help them achieve TWH through a mixed methods approach including email marketing, digital media, and community partners. Our target audiences are private, non-profit and public employers across all sectors; key decision makers including executives (owners, CEOs, directors), human resource professionals,

and practicing health and safety professionals. As part of this panel discussion, we will provide a brief overview of how our Center disseminates TWH best-practices to reach and engage small employers to implement effective and sustainable workplace policies and strategies. Methods Through a series of focus groups representing decision makers, human resource manager, and safety and health professionals we evaluated the barriers and facilitators to engaging small employers. Participants expressed that networking, through local chambers of commerce and business organizations, conference attendance and sponsorship, social media, blogs, local and national radio, and Google searches, were important and appropriate methods to get TWH message out to businesses. They agreed that partnering with insurance carriers, insurance agents, and other businesses that service smaller organizations provides a good way to foster engagement. We also conducted market and formative research understand the major drivers for investing in TWH with this group to help create key messaging that could speak to the business case. This work led to the launch of a TWH communications and marketing strategy that focused on three core initiatives executed through Health Links™, a mentoring program based at our Center that champions health and safety at work. Health Links offers evidence-based Healthy Workplace Certification™ and advising to help organizations and their team members achieve TWH. These initiatives included: 1) developing key partnerships with local organizations, 2) a robust digital media campaign, and 3) storytelling of TWH in practice through case studies and testimonials from senior leaders and workers. We built a website dedicated to engaging employers to take an online assessment to benchmark TWH policies and practices. We trained and deployed a team of community advisors to serve as the liaisons for engaging employers and connecting them with TWH resources. We built a content team to collect, organize, translate, and share TWH best-practices through social media and email marketing. Lastly, we conducted trainings to reach our target audiences in small organizations to offer new TWH knowledge and skill building. Results Since launching our TWH Center, we have been successful in recruiting 554 employers representing 190,388 workers across Colorado to enroll in Health Links. We have trained over 3,200 professionals through both online and in-person community trainings. We have formed partnerships with the largest provider of workers' compensation insurance, local public health agencies, the state's Small Business Development Center Network, and local chambers of commerce representing members across 19 counties. Through digital media activities, we have gained 547 Twitter and 1,220 Facebook followers. Social media posts reach an average of 328 individuals per day and 9,548 individuals per month. Discussion: Collaborating with local public health, chambers of commerce, workers' compensation and economic development groups can result in a streamlined approach to effectively reach and engage small employers to adopt and implement TWH best practices. Marketing and communication planning and strategy are essential to disseminating TWH. Importantly, these strategies need to be tailored to consider the unique needs and values of small employers.

### Center for Healthy Work

*Christina Welter (The University of Illinois at Chicago)*

Introduction Across the country, an increasing number of workers engage in precarious employment. These workers have been affected by profound changes in the way business is conducted in the United States. Workers employed in precarious jobs are often: subject to lower wages, hazardous conditions, discriminatory practices, limited

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