

Conditions of Work that Impact the Health Behaviors of Long-Haul Truck Drivers

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Objective: We sought to describe conditions of work that impact the health of long-haul truck drivers in the context of the Worker Well-being Framework. **Methods:** We conducted semistructured interviews with 33 incoming and current workers, including drivers. Interviews were analyzed and categorized into the five domains of the Worker Well-being Framework. **Results:** The physical environment contributes to unhealthy behaviors (eg, limited access to healthy foods, physical activity, noise). Drivers emphasized that industry policies and culture prioritized customer service over worker well-being. **Conclusions:** Drivers and students had different perceptions about personal responsibility and motivation regarding health behaviors, with students focusing on individual solutions instead of organizational solutions. These insights are essential for developing strategies to create healthier work environments and improve the well-being of long-haul truck drivers.

Keywords: truck drivers, conditions of work, health behaviors, *Total Worker Health*®, WellBQ, occupational safety and health, qualitative study

BACKGROUND

One-third of working-age adults (18–64 years old) suffer from at least one chronic health condition.¹ Chronic health conditions increase the risk of injuries at work^{2,3} and can result in days away from work and elevated workers' compensation costs.⁴ The conditions of work and current workplace policies and practices can also impact health behaviors and productivity.^{5–8}

Six in every 10 adults in the US live with at least one preventable chronic health condition, such as heart disease, stroke, or diabetes.⁹ These health conditions have long been attributed to lifestyle behaviors (eg, diet, physical activity, sleep).^{10–13} Data from the CDC shows that only one out

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Disclaimer: *Total Worker Health*® is a registered trademark of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this article, the reader will be able to:

- Describe conditions of work that impact the health of long-haul truck drivers in the context of the Worker Well-being Framework.
- Compare how long-time drivers and students entering the industry view the role of personal motivation and responsibility in health behaviors.
- Discuss potential organizational changes and policies that could improve the work conditions of long-haul truck drivers.

of 10 Americans meet the federal fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations, and only a quarter meet the physical activity guidelines.^{14,15}

One occupational group at high risk of chronic health conditions is long-haul truck drivers. Seven out of 10 long-haul truck drivers in the United States are obese (body mass index [BMI] ≥ 30),^{16,17} and the prevalence of sleep disorders, diabetes, and heart conditions are higher among long-haul truck drivers than the general US worker population.^{3,16–19} Long-haul truck drivers are also less physically active and consume fewer healthy foods than the general population.^{16,17,20–22} Moreover, their rate of smoking is higher compared to workers in other industries.^{3,23}

The working conditions of long-haul truck drivers are characterized by economic and psychosocial factors that pose risks to both driver health and public safety. Most drivers are compensated, typically, per mile driven, which fails to account for substantial work related to nondriving tasks.²⁴ This system incentivizes drivers to work beyond legal hours-of-service limits often resulting in fatigue, regulatory violations, and multiple adverse psychosocial work factors, including low job control, social isolation, irregular and extended work schedules.^{24–26}

Despite studies reporting the prevalence of unhealthy behaviors and health conditions among long-haul drivers, there is a gap in understanding how the conditions of work influence these behaviors. Furthermore, most existing studies have only surveyed current drivers and do not include drivers entering the industry and their understanding of the link between work conditions and health outcomes. This perspective is necessary to intervene early on factors that can impact health behaviors.

Work is a social determinant of health that has become more recognized and studied in the field of occupational safety and health. For example, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's *Total Worker Health*® approach examines how to intervene on the conditions of work to reduce illness and injuries and improve overall well-being.²⁷ The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Worker Well-being Framework²⁸ uses a comprehensive perspective to define well-being that expands beyond workplace organizational and environmental factors to also address psychosocial factors and individual health. It includes five domains: workplace policies and culture, the physical environment of the workplace, work

evaluation and experience, overall health status, and external factors (eg, home, community, and society). This framework has been used in studies examining burnout and turnover among early education teachers,^{29–31} return to work factors among stroke survivors,³² and turnover among truck drivers.³³

The goal of this qualitative study was to compare the perspectives of incoming and current workers in the long-haul trucking industry about work conditions that influence their health behaviors.

METHODS

Study Population

Participants included supervisors and current drivers in national trucking companies, along with students and instructors in Commercial Driver's License (CDL) courses in Iowa. Supervisors included individuals who directly managed or hired drivers in their companies and were from logistic management, human resources, distribution, dispatching, or health and safety. The supervisors and current drivers were employed at trucking companies in Iowa and Illinois with facilities at various locations around the country. Students and instructors were attending and teaching, respectively, at community colleges offering Class A CDL courses in Iowa. The instructors had previously worked in the trucking industry and had significant knowledge about the industry.

Recruitment

Trucking companies in Iowa and Illinois were contacted to assess their interest in being involved in the research project. The supervisors working directly with the long-haul truck drivers from the organizations that agreed to participate were then contacted for interviews. Supervisors in trucking companies are key stakeholders in the trucking industry; they have a comprehensive understanding of the industry's operational demands and are aware of the challenges faced by drivers.

The drivers were identified with the help of the supervisors who participated in the study. The supervisors first consulted with the drivers to assess their interest in participating. The contact information for drivers who expressed willingness to participate was shared with the research team. As individuals who experience the realities of the profession firsthand, current drivers possess valuable insight into factors that impact health behaviors and overall well-being.

Students and instructors were recruited from colleges that offered courses for obtaining a commercial driver's license (CDL). To initiate the recruitment process, the principal investigator (PI) met with instructors to assess their interest in participating in the study. Instructors provided insights into the training and education provided to new drivers. Instructors then referred students who expressed interest in participating in the study. In addition, the PI visited classrooms and conducted in-person interviews with interested students at their institutions.

Data Collection

In-person or telephone semistructured interviews were conducted, depending on the participant's preference, and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Each participant received \$40 after completion of the interview. Health and safety professionals familiar with the trucking industry and experts in qualitative research reviewed the questions to assess their appropriateness and the duration and format of the interview form. Open-ended questions were used to assess health challenges among drivers. To identify conditions of work influencing health behaviors among truck drivers, all participants were asked, "What are some health-related challenges faced by truck drivers?" The drivers were also asked, "How has your health changed since you became a driver?" Prompts were used to generate additional

and/or detailed responses from the participants. The institutional review board (IRB) at the University of Iowa approved the project.

During the interviews, the interviewer utilized prompts to keep participants focused on key topics while allowing for open-ended responses. These prompts not only facilitated detailed discussions but also played a crucial role in guiding respondents to elaborate on their unique experiences, challenges, and viewpoints. The prompts also helped uncover how different stakeholders—truck drivers, supervisors, students and instructors—perceived and responded to workplace conditions, health concerns, and industry challenges. This approach provided diverse perspectives of the trucking workforce, discussed in the results section.

Data Analysis

Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed into text and coded using the framework analysis approach.^{34–36} In this deductive analysis approach, researchers start with initial categories to code the data (ie, the Worker Well-being Framework²⁸) and then identify recurring and significant themes. This process begins with thoroughly reading the interview transcripts to become familiar with the content and how it aligns with the framework. Similar responses to each question were grouped into the five framework domains (eg, workplace physical environment and safety climate; work evaluation and experience; work policies and culture; health status; and home, community, and society). Responses from the participants were reviewed again to create final categories to answer the research question: *what are the conditions of work that influence health behaviors among long-haul truck drivers?* Lastly, the perspectives on the impact of work conditions on health behaviors were compared between incoming and current workers in the long-haul trucking industry.

RESULTS

Participant Characteristics

Students and instructors were recruited from community colleges offering Class A CDL courses in Iowa whereas supervisors and current drivers were recruited from trucking companies in Iowa and Illinois that had facilities at various locations around the country. Thirty-three participants in different stages and positions in the trucking industry were interviewed: students in CDL classes ($n = 14$), current drivers ($n = 7$), supervisors ($n = 5$), and instructors in CDL classes ($n = 7$). All but four participants were male; there were three female supervisors and one female instructor. Current drivers reported working in the industry for 21 years on average (range: 3–33 years) and for an average of five trucking companies (range: 3–8 companies). Two supervisors and all instructors worked as long-haul truck drivers before moving into their current positions. The instructors had worked in the trucking industry for an average of 20 years in varying positions (eg, over-the-road driver, local driver, dispatch/distribution manager).

Workplace Physical Environment and Safety Culture

Many of the interview participants focused on how the physical work environment (eg, the truck cab, truck stops, distribution centers) impacted health behaviors. There are limited healthy food choices available when the drivers are on the road. Truck stops consist mostly of fast-food restaurants with limited fruit and vegetable options. In addition, the few healthy options available (eg, fruit, vegetables, water) are also expensive: "It's cheaper to grab a soda and a bag of chips rather than a bottle of water or a Gatorade and a salad or a thing of fruit. You spend \$3 versus \$6. You do that twice a day, five days a week, that adds up for truck drivers." [Instructor, 7]. The students also recognized the lack of healthy food choices at the truck stops. However, they also mentioned how the individual drivers need to resist the pressure of their physical environment by setting personal goals

and planning: *"It really depends on what my priorities are during my off time... Am I going to be intentional with the way I eat? Am I going to say no to the truck stop junk food and instead be prepared and have stuff that's not going to be [fast food]."* [Student, 12]

In addition to the costs and lack of access to healthy food choices at truck stops, other factors play a role. For example, the location of the truck stops where 18-wheelers can park is limited. These trucks fit either in truck stops, rest areas, or truck-only rest areas, all of which can be used for overnight parking during mandatory driving breaks. However, truck-only rest areas provide a place for drivers to park but do not have food options available. Other rest areas may have vending machines, but there is limited space for parking the larger trucks. These rest areas are also located away from cities or grocery stores, where a greater range of food options may be available. Some drivers may have refrigerators and/or microwaves in their cabs, but not all employers allow these appliances. Even if a driver wanted to take the time to go to a restaurant or grocery store, 18-wheelers do not fit and are also not allowed to park at most restaurants and grocery stores: *"The only places we can get trucks into, 99% of them is all fast food. There's no real sit-down restaurants or no way to get anything to eat. Then if you got to buy the stuff at truck stops, it costs you three times as much if you went to the grocery store to buy it. But you can't get trucks into a grocery store."* [Driver, 5]

The physical work environment also impacts other health behaviors including physical activity and sleep. Due to the mobile, yet sedentary nature of work, all participants stated that long-haul truck drivers do not get enough physical activity. According to the participants, the daily schedule and the areas where they can park limit the drivers' ability to exercise. The instructors and drivers emphasized that rest areas do not provide a setting conducive to exercise due to the location of the rest areas that are often closer to the highway with no walking trails or sidewalks. The supervisors and drivers specifically mentioned that truck-only rest stops are places only to park trucks, and they do not have areas to walk or exercise: *"The availability of a place to actually get some exercise. Maybe they're at a place where they pretty much have to stay in their truck and can't get out and really do anything. So that would limit their exercise, going for a walk or something like that."* [Supervisor, 4] Again, the students indicated that the driver needs to be motivated to exercise and maintain their health regardless of their location and schedule. The students stated that when they start driving, they planned to engage in physical activity every day even when they were parked at truck stops or rest areas: *"Suppose we get 11 hours a day. Most people, most our drivers, ..., are supposed to exercise. Maybe every day, 30 minutes, 25 minutes. That's the best thing."* [Student, 11]

Sleep is also impacted by the location of these rest stops. Participants in all groups mentioned that truck stops and rest areas are usually located directly off the highway in areas with a high flow of traffic and a lot of noise. The drivers stated that some companies will rent parking spots at distribution centers off the highway for drivers to park their trucks. This can provide a quieter place to sleep, however, these sites may have trucks parked from several different companies, which leads to traffic holdups when all the drivers are trying to get on the road in the morning or when drivers are trying to exit their parking spots. This can dissuade drivers from utilizing them: *"The distribution center is a really crowded, small place. Our company has bought 3 parking spots at this center. I came in this morning at 4:15 am. And when I got in my truck, I was pinned in, and I couldn't get out."* [Driver, 7]. The students also identified the perceived impact of the work demands on sleep and the long-term health of the drivers. They suggested that trucking companies provide motel rooms for drivers so they do not have to sleep in the truck cab: *"I feel everybody should get a room, you know. Just because you do not get to sleep comfortably in the cab. Having a good bed to sleep on. That definitely works you know. Cause you don't want to wake up with a sore neck, messed up back."* [Student, 2]

Potential solutions promoting healthy eating proposed by all groups focused primarily on the individual rather than the employer. For example, instead of purchasing food at truck stops, many mentioned bringing food from home or creating a "personal meal plan". In addition to meal planning, drivers and instructors stated that they personally bought a microwave and refrigerator for their truck where they could store food and then cook it. Students also discussed the advantages of having a healthy meal plan and stated that they plan to prepare meals for the road when they start driving. While a meal plan could be a healthy option, the participants also discussed issues related to maintaining the plan. For example, they are home only for a few days each month, and most of their time would be spent on preparing meals instead of spending time with their family. Employer-level solutions referenced by participants included workplace incentive programs that could motivate drivers to engage in healthy behaviors and providing a separate room to allow sleep and rest when they are done with their hours at work.

Work Evaluation and Experience includes support at work, job demands (eg, time constraints, long hours of work), and an individual's job satisfaction. Good communication with one's supervisor, particularly about the work conditions, was identified as important: *"So, if you have good communication, that helps your employment. And it goes both ways, management and driver."* [Instructor] Particularly for new drivers, who may have unrealistic expectations about the work conditions and their ability to engage in healthy behaviors: *"The students that I was training, they had no idea on how long they were going to be out once they got into their first truck. They didn't know if they were going to be over the road [long-haul truck driving] or they didn't know what all came in that. The expectations of the students and the company needs to be clearer."* [Instructor, 4]

Drivers indicated that conditions of work such as long work hours, time constraints, and regulations impacted their health behaviors. A major factor identified by participants in all groups was time constraints. Federal regulations in the United States allow drivers to work a 14-hour day, which includes a maximum of 11 hours driving. After this, they are required to take 10 hours off. During the workday drivers are transporting loads from one location to another and often the loads are time-sensitive, which means the load needs to make it to a specific location at a given time. This pressure to complete the job during this time frame also reduces the ability of drivers to engage in physical activity or get enough sleep and promotes the consumption of fast food: *"Well I think just the fact that, DOT regulations, they can have 14 hours of work a day. And that 10 hours is time they need to shower, eat, talk to their family, sleep. They're trying to fit a lot into that time, and they may not have the energy or just the allotment of time to exercise."* [Supervisor, 2] The drivers mentioned that the daily schedule and time-sensitive loads sometimes forces them to wake up early and work without enough sleep, *"... sometimes go without sleep to get the loads delivered on time."* [Driver, 4]

One driver suggested companies could use an incentive program to promote healthy behaviors: *"And I think something that company should do is maybe have an incentive to pay you to go out and walk, or do something like that, you know? They're not getting their exercise. They're extremely unhealthy..."* [Driver, 5] Additionally, technology could be used to address driver concerns, including work conditions that impact health, in a timely manner: *"There is a driver retention app that some companies use to address issues quickly because drivers aren't always going to tell you what their problem is but they'll type it on their app. Developing an app for your company and making things as digital as possible. So I think it's just trying to stay ahead of technology and how to best utilize that to make their jobs easier, make them more comfortable, making sure that their truck is set up the right way."* [Supervisor, 2] Providing drivers with a single point of contact is another way to increase a driver's job satisfaction, which can impact their health behaviors: *"We're trying to give them more attention in terms of giving them a driver manager so they kind of have one point*

of contact and somebody who can address all their needs.” [Supervisor, 2]

The **Workplace Policies and Culture** domain encompasses organizational policies, industry regulations, and tangible benefits (eg, pay, health insurance). All participants discussed how industry regulations that allow 14-hours of work contribute to unhealthy behaviors among drivers, limiting their time to take breaks, exercise and eat healthy food: “I can drive my 11 hours and that’s it. I’m done. But I can’t go nowhere, because I got to sit there for another 6 hours or until the clock restarts. So, then you lay there and try to sleep and you can’t. Then when it is time to go you don’t feel like going, because you’ve not been sleeping, and you don’t want to get up.” [Driver, 1] Drivers also mentioned that despite the sedentary nature of the job, truck driving leads to fatigue due to whole-body vibration and the need for constant vigilance while driving.

Policies in the trucking industry and a culture that prioritizes customer service over worker well-being impact health behaviors among drivers: “...we are a customer service biz. We have time that we have to maintain. On-time services. On-time pickup. On-time delivery and that’s affecting the actual driver’s wellbeing.” [Supervisor, 1] Specifically, policies that restrict drivers from loading or unloading the freight (eg, “no touch” policies) were described as having an impact on physical activity. Instructors and the current drivers indicated that most receiving companies do not allow drivers to touch the freight, and drivers are required to sit and wait in the break room or in their cabs until the loading and unloading of the freight is completed. Participants stated that these “no touch” policies limit the physical activity of the drivers. When they are allowed to get out of the cab and move around, the drivers have opportunities to get some physical activity: “Sometimes this job is so demanding, that it doesn’t allow you to get out of the truck. Like I’ll give you an example. We go to a customer, some of these customers will restrict you from even getting out of your truck, or they’ll have you go in the break room and sit there. They won’t allow you to roam or walk on their property or do anything. You end up sitting there waiting for your truck to be unloaded or loaded. And then you’re off and running to the next pickup or delivery, and same thing there.” [Driver, 3]

Another example is a company policy that provides or allows drivers to install refrigerators and microwaves in their trucks. This makes drivers less reliant on fast food as they have a place to store food and heat up meals: “Some companies stay away from putting refrigerators in the trucks. I think that installing a refrigerator and a microwave just offers one less thing that the drivers have to provide or have to go out and purchase in order to do this job.” [Supervisor, 2]

To recruit and retain employees, companies often offer competitive pay and benefits packages (Aryal et al, 2023): “I knew I could make a lot of money doing this.” [Student, 3] Instructors describe how they encourage students to evaluate offers and inquire about benefits before accepting a position: “We encourage them to take a good look. So, there’s a comparison sheet we give them. It is a list of items and as they go through that list, what’s most important to you as a driver. Okay? And then, when the recruiters come in here, or if you’re doing an interview ask those pertinent questions.” [Instructor, 2] Competitive pay and benefits packages are considered important to retain new drivers entering the industry: “I would think a lot of that would be good benefits, a good pay package and good driver benefits, medical insurance definitely, life insurance, dental insurance, and retirement, 401 K’s and pensions and things like that.” [Driver, 4]

Health Status considers individual characteristics that impact one’s ability to work and how work conditions affect health. For many drivers, trucking is a second career. These drivers are older, often come from physically demanding industries (eg, construction), and may have current or chronic health conditions: “...all my life has been strong back, weak-mind jobs whether it be work in stone quarries, bailing hay, picking stones, concrete work. The body has told me I need to slow it out. And, with the money that this industry pays and

the opportunities of being able to get into a job that isn’t quite so physical all the time, that’s kind of what’s directed me towards it too.” [Student, 4] However, the sedentary nature of the job can worsen health conditions. Instructors, supervisors, and current drivers indicated that their health was adversely impacted after they started driving: “I started driving [a] truck, I was 250 pounds, I went clear up to 500 pounds. My health went to hell.” [Driver, 3] All participants indicated that health behaviors, primarily diet, were affected by various aspects of the work environment and organizational aspects of the trucking industry, such as long hours of work, time away from the family, and time constraints. “Well, I think just the fact that, I mean DOT regulations, they can have 14 hours of work a day. And that 10 hours is time they need to shower, eat, talk to their family, sleep. They’re trying to fit a lot into that time, and they may not have the energy or just the allotment of time to exercise.” [Supervisor, 2] In contrast, most of the solutions to promote healthy behaviors proposed by all participants focused on the individual. Meal planning and prepping was often discussed as a solution to unhealthy eating on the road: “I used to meal prep. I used to only be home five or 6 days a month and when I came home, I meal prepped, and I had a fridge in the truck and a microwave or a little oven thing.” [Instructor, 3]

The **Home, Community, and Society** domain captures intangible factors such as social relationships, and tangible factors including financial security and activities outside of work. Drivers indicated that they did not want to spend their limited hours at home preparing to go back out on the road. “We do have some drivers that premake their meals. They’d try and do some preparation but if they’re home on Friday and leaving out on a Sunday, they’re spending a portion of their downtime just preparing to go back out again. Some of them may not want to be slaving over the grill making a healthy meal or packaging up all their meals.” [Supervisor, 2] Furthermore, instructors and current drivers also mentioned the support of their family in maintaining healthy behaviors. Some instructors said that their spouses were more conscious about their health and packed their meal before they left for the road: “Even when I had my own truck, I didn’t have a microwave, but I ate better because my wife prepped everything for me when I left. I probably ate better on the road than I did it at home.” [Instructor, 6]

DISCUSSION

The participants in the study all reported that the physical work environment is a major contributor to unhealthy behaviors. Unlike other industries, long-haul truck drivers can spend days away from home working and living in their truck.^{25,37,38} In addition to physical demands (long hours in seated sedentary work, whole body vibration), and isolation^{19,20,39} they also lack access to healthy food, opportunities for physical activity, and sleep in their vehicles at truck stops.^{17,19,20,39}

Policies at the industry and employer levels also were barriers to healthy eating, exercise and sleep. These include industry-specific policies such as time on the road and required breaks, and employer policies such as “no touch” policies and restrictions that do not allow a refrigerator or microwave in the truck cab. Although solutions at both the individual and organizational level were mentioned, there was a contrast between students preparing to enter the industry and current drivers and supervisors. Even though the students were aware of the physical work environment and organizational factors that contribute to unhealthy behaviors, they also believed that it was primarily an individual driver’s responsibility to maintain their own health. The students felt that when they began driving, they would make choices that would allow them to engage in healthy behaviors. However, it was clear from the interviews with current and former drivers that their health behaviors changed once they started driving. Tight schedules with multiple deliveries limited their opportunities for physical activity and increased their consumption of “grab-n-go” food items (eg, fries,

sandwiches, soda). Plus, these food items are hard to avoid when they are readily available, quick, and low-priced.

These findings are supported by studies that have evaluated truck stop facilities and determined that most truck stops are not conducive to promoting healthy behaviors.^{40–43} Although these studies identified several truck stops with facilities (such as showers, laundry facilities, motels or hotels nearby, driver lounges, and restaurants), there were few healthy food choices in the restaurants or convenience stores and limited options for physical activity.^{40,43} The participants in this study reiterated this and mentioned that most of the truck stops do not provide healthy food choices and places to exercise. Moreover, the participants also focused on the location of truck-only rest areas that are usually located in an isolated setting on the highway. These rest areas only permit trailer trucks to park and do not have space for exercise. They are also located away from restaurants or grocery stores. According to the drivers and instructors, there are limited parking spaces and if a driver does not reach a truck stop early enough, they will end up parking their truck on the shoulder or the side of the road overnight. These factors have a direct impact on the diet, physical activity, and the sleep quality of the drivers.

All participants were aware of the relationship between work factors, health behaviors, and chronic health conditions. However, student participants were confident about their ability to maintain their daily schedule of exercising, eating healthy and getting enough sleep. In contrast, current and former drivers emphasized the difficulties of engaging in physical activity and eating healthy food while on the road. According to the current drivers and instructors, it is not practical to engage in physical activity because of the long hours of work, which exhaust the drivers, and the lack of exercise options at truck stops. This indicates the need to inform students of the current environmental and organizational conditions they will face as drivers and to offer feasible options for maintaining behaviors that can promote the health and well-being of all long-haul truck drivers.

Solutions to improve the drivers' health behaviors can be addressed at multiple levels. Other studies have identified the use of relay systems or buddy drivers as ways to shorten a driver's time on the road.⁴⁴ Changing the truck stop environment to increase accessibility of healthy and affordable food options, more opportunities for physical activity, and better sleeping accommodations (eg, hotel rooms, renting space off the highway) may lead to behaviors that promote health. Company policies and benefits programs can provide drivers with education and/or incentives to encourage healthier food options and allow drivers to move around or use onsite exercise facilities while waiting at distribution centers.

Supervisors could also play a greater role in promoting well-being and recognizing the impact of time away from home (eg, work-life balance) and its impact on health behaviors.⁴⁵ The importance of the driver-supervisor relationship was emphasized in the interviews. This includes regular check-ins to allow supervisors to be aware of work conditions and the concerns of drivers that impact health. Communication through apps may also be preferred by drivers who are more willing to type a message than have a conversation with a supervisor. Organizational solutions at the workplace and in CDL courses can also be implemented. For example, onboarding should include training about health insurance, incentive programs, and available resources (eg, health screenings and ways to promote health while on the road). CDL courses can be used to align expectations of new drivers about the relationship between conditions of work in the trucking industry and the potential impact on health behaviors.

The study had possible limitations related to generalizability of the findings. Even though the physical work environment of long-haul truck drivers is similar across companies, organizational policies and culture varies. Due to the small sample size, we may have limited representation of major characteristics of trucking companies. Furthermore, limited information is available about the organizations where drivers worked (eg, size of companies, driving routes, pay and benefits

structures). Therefore, there is a need for additional studies to understand other factors that may also affect the health behaviors among long-haul truck drivers.

CONCLUSION

Using the Worker Well-Being framework, interviews with incoming and current workers in the trucking industry were analyzed and categorized into distinct domains. Similar to other research, this study identified the impact of the work environment of long-haul truckers on unhealthy behaviors. Although students entering the industry felt that drivers can address the barriers, experienced drivers and supervisors felt that the work environment and organizational policies were major contributors to unhealthy behaviors. Drivers stated that industry policies and culture tended to prioritize customer service over worker well-being. Understanding the relationship between industry factors and health behaviors is critically important because the trucking industry currently suffers from high rates of turnover. Furthermore, for some drivers trucking is a second career, and many may enter the industry with chronic health conditions that can be exacerbated by this work. In addition to providing health benefits and onboarding, the implementation of workplace policies and programs such as relay systems, increased communication with supervisors, allowing appliances in the truck, providing hotel rooms can improve the health and well-being of long-haul truck drivers.

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