Can you really improve your employees' health?

How healthy are your employees?

The data tells a story that is probably born out in your office or business: health-related productivity issues are costing our region over $500 million every year. In fact, these productivity losses, due to absenteeism and presenteeism, are estimated to be the costs of just three specific health problems: obesity, hypertension and diabetes.

But data doesn’t tell the whole story. Let’s imagine an employee of a Nashville small business, Mary, and picture how health issues interact with her everyday life. She spends over 30% of her income on rent, leaving her with little disposable income. She smokes, like 18% of our local population in the region. She, like almost 10% of the Nashville region, does not have health insurance because she works for a small business that can’t afford to pay for traditional insurance yet. Mary has to commute back and forth to work since her options for employment close to home are limited. On top of that, she can’t easily walk to a grocery store from her house — Nashville ranks as the 7th least walkable city in the United States. She’s around 20 pounds overweight, like the average Nashvillian, and is currently worried about a friend who she thinks may have a drug problem, like the majority of our residents who have someone in their lives struggling with addiction.

All of these factors, social, environmental, genetic and lack of access, combine to make Mary’s state of health a complicated knot to unravel.

So what can you do, as a business owner, to help support your employees in improving their health and reducing the cost burden of health issues for both your own business and our region as a whole?

We have created a resource, using original research and examples of best practices from area companies, that explores how to build and maintain an effective employee wellness program. The tips and lessons outlined in this resource apply to companies large and small and cover everything from designing a program to analyzing results for returns on your investment in employee health.

Connect With the Chamber

If you are a small business that has already implemented an employee wellness program, we want to hear from you! Email Carly Vaughn, Digital Content Strategist at the Chamber, to share your story and perhaps be featured in an upcoming article.

All data mentioned in this blog comes from our 2017 Vital Signs report.