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*A research intervention and information center for
improving the health of New England employees*

The **Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace (CPH-NEW)** – at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and University of Connecticut – is one of the original two Total Worker Health® (TWH) Centers of Excellence. TWH is a national research program that evaluates the potential benefits of integrating improvements to work conditions and individual health. CPH-NEW emphasizes the key role of workers themselves in prioritizing health/safety issues and designing interventions. We focus our research efforts primarily on the corrections and healthcare sectors.



Healthcare: Nurses and nursing aides are among the highest risk groups for back injuries, especially due to patient handling tasks. CPH-NEW has worked intensively in the nursing home sector to study the factors that influence the success of safe resident handling programs. Our research showed notable reductions in back pain and workers' compensation claims from a well-designed program. In addition, nursing homes with higher return on investment had lower worker turnover and better medical outcomes for residents. These results have informed the *Massachusetts Department of Public Health* efforts to reduce healthcare worker back injuries, state-wide. A new study in public sector healthcare facilities, including VA hospitals, will evaluate the expansion of existing health and safety committees into teams capable of analyzing and affecting the links between workforce health and well-being and patient care, in line with TWH principles.

Corrections: Corrections officers (COs) have some of the worst health outcomes of any occupational group. At the start of our project, more than 80% in Connecticut were overweight or obese; young officers had twice the rate of hypertension of their peers in other jobs; major depression was significantly above national norms; and their life expectancy was 12 twelve years less than other public sector workers. Most ominously, this adverse health profile was already firmly established in the first 2-3 years of work, with 38% of COs being pre-hypertensive or hypertensive and 78% being overweight or obese. Thus, the successes of CPH-NEW in this occupational group are notable, with higher CO participation and acceptance of the program designed by COs themselves, compared to a best practices, management-designed program.

- An officer-administered peer mentoring program, strongly endorsed by supervisors and administrators, was designed and carried out by COs. Compared to conventional instruction of new officers, those who were peer-mentored improved in fat-free muscle mass, diastolic hypertension, and workplace burn-out (a measure of psychological stress).
- Corrections supervisors developed their own root cause analysis survey with CPH-NEW assistance. They identified sleep deficiency as the single most addressable problem: 68% had < 6 hours of sleep per night. The supervisors, aided by the researchers, developed their own customized sleep app, managed through a smartphone. The final app product will be disseminated throughout the Department of Correction and is already being presented to professional organizations for national use.

Dissemination to Stakeholders: CPH-NEW has publicly shared its field-tested *Intervention Design and Analysis Scorecard (IDEAS) Tool* for launching a comprehensive Healthy Workplace Participatory Program (www.uml.edu/Research/CPH-NEW/Healthy-Work-Participatory-Program). The program engages workers and managers to identify and achieve key safety, health and wellbeing outcomes in an integrated manner and to evaluate the outcomes according to their own needs and perspectives. Over 750 practitioners and health professionals have participated in HWPP webinars since 2011.