

## Managing Stress: Helpful Hints for a Healthier Workplace

Today's workplace is one that involves high levels of stress that were not prevalent a decade ago. Although the economy seems to be picking up many employers have gone through significant down-sizing. Now with businesses growing, employees are responsible for duties that were previously shared by two or three different individuals. As a result, their workload has doubled or tripled, and so have their responsibilities. All these factors lead to increased levels of stress in the workplace.

Stress in the workplace is something that most everyone has experienced at some point in time.

When a deadline is drawing near on a project those involved may seem tense. Today's issue is that stress has become part of the typical work-day for many individuals, leading to unhealthy lifestyles. When stress is high, production is inconsistent. Some people do their best work under pressure, while others may not be able to function. Since many companies are not in the position to hire additional staff to distribute the responsibilities, effective stress relievers should be reviewed and implemented into employee programs.



One stress reliever that has been found to be very effective is exercise. Many companies are encouraging their employees to start up a fitness program. Some companies have built gyms into their buildings, others have offered to pay memberships to fitness clubs to make it a more viable option. Many of these costs may not be realistic for smaller companies. If you are operating on a small budget you may want to encourage a fitness walk at lunch, or a group that meets after work to jog, play tennis, or attend a community aerobics class.

Providing your employees with information can also help them deal with their stress in a healthy manner. Some helpful hints from the American Heart Association are as follows: Take 15 to 20 minutes a day to sit quietly and think of a peaceful picture, try to accept things that you can't

change, exercise regularly and limit your caffeine intake. Remember when dealing with your stress that you are in control of your emotions and by managing them better you can easily avoid unnecessary stress.



One sure way to find out what helps your employees best relieve stress is to get them involved in the implementation of the program. Find out what works best for majority of your employees and, if feasible, implement their program of choice. By helping your employees to decrease their stress levels, you will not only have healthier employees, but also a more productive workforce.

## Workers' Comp Workshop

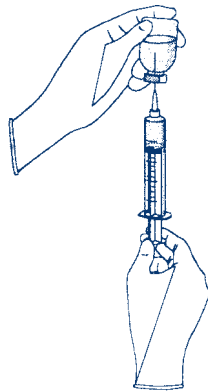
The Santa Fe Springs Chamber, in partnership with the chambers of Pico Rivera, La Mirada, Norwalk and Whittier, is presenting a workshop on Workers' Compensation legislation and its impact on employers. **Save the date of September 28, 2005.** HealthFirst's medical director, Dr. Ronald Crowell will be one of the presenters. At this time the location and time has not been determined. For more information on the location and time of the workshop call the Santa Fe Springs Chamber at 562-944-1616 in August.

## Protect Your Employees From the Flu

Flu season is rapidly approaching and it is time to start thinking about how you can protect your employees from getting the flu. The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each fall. Each vaccine contains three influenza viruses—one A (H<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub>) virus, one A (H<sub>1</sub>N<sub>1</sub>) virus, and one B virus. The viruses in the vaccine change each year based on international surveillance and scientists' predictions about which types and strains of viruses will circulate in a given year.

The CDC recommends getting a flu vaccination in October or November before the flu season hits. The vaccine is approximately 70 to 90 percent effective for healthy adults, according to the CDC. Even if the vaccine doesn't prevent you from getting the flu, you are still likely to be far less sick than you would have been without the shot. The vaccine also greatly reduces the chance of severe complications.

HealthFirst Medical Group will be giving flu vaccinations starting in the early part of October provided we receive our order from our suppliers. We have a limited supply of injections, so please call **Yolanda Amador at (562) 949-9328** to reserve your shots and schedule a date. Don't let the flu catch up to your employees this year!



## Do You Need A Drug Testing Consortium?

If you are a company that employs drivers who are required to have a commercial driver's license, they are, with few exceptions, subject to the controlled substance and alcohol testing rule under the Federal Highway Administration and the DOT.

HealthFirst's Consortium helps many companies comply with the Federal Regulations. What are the advantages and benefits of membership?

- Members need not incur the expense of learning and complying with federal guidelines, which are lengthy, complex and ever-changing; instead this compliance process is done by qualified, knowledgeable professionals.
- Members receive all reports and records as mandated for compliance from the consortium.
- Members receive technical and administrative support from qualified, knowledge professionals in the event of DOT audits.
- Members are easily able to budget the cost of compliance. All variable fees are paid only as covered employees are added. **Call 562-926-3440 x309 for more information.**

### Changes in Company Information?

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Insurance Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_



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