



# Our Wellness Story

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on behalf of Metro Communications Agency 9-1-1 Wellness Team

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# Who We Are...

## Metro Communications Agency 9-1-1

- We are the **9-1-1 Center** for the City of Sioux Falls and Minnehaha County
- Our team of just under **50 staff** answer 9-1-1 calls for approximately 200,000 individuals who claim our community as their home, along with thousands more daily visitors and employees
- Our staff dispatch for first responders serving 3 law enforcement agencies, 5 ambulance providers, 14 fire departments, local animal control and county Emergency Management
- Together we provide these services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year – **we are always staffed to serve our community!**
- Our staff are known as your “**first**” first responders, they are the link to getting an appropriate response dispatched as soon as possible, and serve as the lifeline to all of the first responders we work beside



*Preserving the lifeline... Every second matters, every call counts*

# Our Wellness Program

- Identified as a goal in 2009
  - Presentation gained buy-in from management....with a minimal budget
- Small beginnings in 2010, organized/led by salaried management staff
  - **Surveyed all staff** to identify top 10 health concerns for developing future programs
  - Created **Intranet Wellness page**: wellness links, activities and educational articles
  - **Snacktastics** – “at cost” healthy snacks as vending machine alternative
  - Periodic wellness related **emails** following National “health” days/months themes
  - A single “program” modeled after a successful program implemented by a partner agency – **Holiday Weight Loss Challenge**
    - Prizes were all free: agency provided “**Wellness leave**” plus a few donated prizes
  - Agency cost = free **Health Screenings** and **flu shots** to all staff
- Staff team of “**Wellness Advocates**” established in 2011
- Moving forward
  - SD Good & Healthy Workplaces WorkWell Mini Grants (we’ve received 4 to date) have allowed us to expand programs and access professionally provided services
  - Successes, even small or individual ensure continued support/increased agency budget
  - Participation remains strong today; over **40%** cumulative average

# How We've Grown

## Achievements

- Snacktasticks remains popular and only requires staff time (no agency cost)
- Vary motivators with each program
- Staff centered wellness team = staff buy-in and improved honest feedback
- 24/7 setting provides opportunities for smaller groups/more hands on
- Small budget empowers creativity
- No need to reinvent the wheel; be sure to give credit to program developers
- Helping just one person is a huge success
- Repeat successful programs; empower staff to share their success stories
- Channel/empower team member's strengths
- Access grant funds and state resources to enhance & expand programs

## Barriers

- Healthy snacks: be strong...encourage quality, beware of quantity, mix it up!
- Not everyone will like every program
- Without a leader/authority, direction may be unclear and teams may falter
- 24/7 setting challenges group activities with increased costs/scheduling impossibility
- Small budget requires creativity
- Non-credentialed leader = lack of expertise
- Don't expect to "measure" all success; not all programs need to have a required achievement or award
- Maintaining good habits often requires reminders; some participants may not finish
- Look beyond physical; survey your staff needs
- Be flexible, gather feedback, make it better next time

One staff increased biweekly payroll direct deposit to savings by \$100 after debt reduction because of our financial wellness program

Average cumulative wellness program participation over 40%

Three of our staff have been active Wellness Advocates since inception in 2010

One financial wellness scholarship recipient shared books and tools empowering coworkers to pay down personal debt

“I think it will do great things for the agency. Healthy people could mean less sick time, less gumpiness! The possibilities are endless!”

Several hundred pounds and inches have been lost during holiday healthy eating challenges

Several staff quit smoking and have remained tobacco free

Staff have responded with personal and shift related challenges to encourage physical activity beyond wellness programs

Our Wellness team has successfully led over 20 wellness programs for our staff since 2010, plus developed & maintained resources like Snacktastics, wellness bulletin boards and other educational materials

# METRO



## Wellness

Physical, Mental, Financial & Emotional