

## **Build a Culture of Health**

A culture of health means that employees' health and well-being are valued, supported and promoted through workplace wellness programs, policies and environments. A culture of health has been described as the soil in which the seeds of healthy workplace initiatives are planted, underlying all health promotion efforts. It extends beyond individual health improvement programs, becoming an integral part of the way the organization operates.

To build a culture of health, it's encouraged that State of Minnesota leadership visibly demonstrate their support for healthy programs (e.g., take part in "State of Wellbeing" programs), issue communications that show employee wellness and wellbeing is important to the organization (e.g., the agency mission statement incorporates employee wellness as a main goal of the organization) and make sure employees feel comfortable joining organization wellness and wellbeing initiatives (e.g., employees are encouraged to take a 30 minute break for physical activity, and they are assured that this will not be viewed as "slacking off" or "goofing around").

Other important components of a culture of health include rewards and recognition for making healthy choices, discouraging unhealthy behavior, teaching healthy skills, making people aware of all the programs and activities that support wellness, providing and encouraging peer support and developing wellbeing leaders who shape the State of Wellbeing programs. This culture should be present in all aspects of organization life, becoming a routine part of business operations and aligning with overall organizational goals and existing company culture.

"Build a Culture of Health." American Heart Association, 31 Aug. 2015.