

WORKPLACEwellness

A healthy workplace is a great investment

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This issue of Workplace Wellness is brought to you by York Region Community and Health Services. It is available to any workplace in York Region. We encourage you to copy and distribute this newsletter. Our team of health professionals offers information and education on workplace wellness issues at no charge!

The evolution of a diverse workforce in York Region



“The recent immigrant population in York Region is increasing at a faster rate than the non-immigrant population. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of recent immigrants increased by 132% and the number of non-immigrants increased by 31%.”

Source: The Regional Municipality of York. (2006) *Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region*. Newmarket, Ontario.

In the past, when we connected the word ‘change’ with the workplace, it was all about shifting values, processes, and the rapid pace of technological progress. What we’re discovering is that change encompasses much more than that. An increasingly diverse workforce is no longer on the horizon; it has arrived.

Current statistical trends in the workplace point towards a downward spiral in the number of skilled trades workers, an increasing pool of employees nearing retirement in many fields, and an influx of new immigrants who are ready and willing to work, but face the challenges inherent with integrating into a new culture, community and work environment.

Statistics Canada identified that immigrants made up over one fifth of Canada’s labour force in 2006. In York Region,

immigrants now make up almost 43% of the population which is likely to impact diversity in a variety of sectors in the coming years. According to ***Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region***, the top five countries of birth for recent immigrants in York Region were Hong Kong (19%), China (13%), Russian Federation (7%), Iran (7%) and India (6%).

The census numbers show that newcomers to Canada account for almost half of all those in Canada who have a PhD. “Skilled immigrants bring high levels of education, innovative thinking and international experience to your organization.” (Information courtesy of hireimmigrants.ca, 2008)

Statistics Canada also indicated that for the first time ever, there are just as many Canadian workers over 40 as there are under. Currently 15.3% of Canadian workers are aged 55 or older. Why should we be concerned? Labour shortages in the coming years are predicted to impact a broad range of occupations. Retaining skilled workers, valuing the experience and dedication of older workers, and embracing the integration of new immigrants into the workplace will be the keys to survival.

Diversity – cultural, generational, gender – in the workplace enables York Region to move forward in the global economy, ensures sustainability and viability as the labour shortage looms, and most importantly, opens the door to potential creative and strategic advantages.

Planning the most effective wellness program for your organization involves assessing the needs of all of your employees. While employees who are recent immigrants don’t necessarily require specific programs or resources, it is important to take note of the following:

- Newcomers may not know where to turn for general health related information and resources
- Language and cultural barriers may breed isolation so tapping into additional integration supports and networks in the community should be encouraged (www.yorkwelcome.ca)

For information about developing a Comprehensive Workplace Wellness program for your workplace or accessing health promotion resources in a variety of languages, contact our Workplace Wellness and Active Communities Team by calling **Health Connection** at **1-800-361-5653**.

If you would like to learn about the Human Services Planning Coalition, Inclusivity Action Plan for York Region, visit the publications section of www.york.ca

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Workplace Wellness Program
Health Connection
1-800-361-5653

Research in review: Put diabetes on your agenda

By 2010, diabetes will have reached epidemic proportions – it is expected that three million Canadians will have diabetes.

There are a number of factors that are contributing to the increasing number of people with type 2 diabetes. We have an aging population in Canada. Baby boomers are a huge group in our population who are at risk for age-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes. We're less active and consuming high calorie diets, which is increasing the rates of obesity. We also have growing populations of people at greater risk of diabetes. In fact, 79.7 per cent of new Canadians come from populations of higher risk of type 2 diabetes (Aboriginal, Hispanic, Asian, South Asian or African descent).

Workplace implications

Despite these concerning facts, type 2 diabetes can be prevented. By committing to the principles of comprehensive workplace health promotion and building them into organizational goals and strategic plans, corporations can help halt the impending epidemic of type 2 diabetes and keep valued employees healthier, happier and productive.

Practice comprehensive workplace health promotion by:

- Encouraging healthy living
- Promoting empowerment, teamwork and collaboration
- Providing a healthy work environment
- Creating a work-life balance

When companies invest in employee health, they reap big benefits.

Submitted by the Canadian Diabetes Association

Source:
Statistics Canada, 2006 census
Canadian Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.ca
1-800-BANTING (226-8464)

York Region web portal serves newcomers

The skills, education and knowledge of newcomers play a key role economically and culturally in making Ontario strong and prosperous, so promoting York Region to newcomers and potential immigrants has taken on a new dimension.

The Regional Municipality of York, in partnership with the Province and community groups, recently launched Welcome to York Region, www.yorkwelcome.ca. This website provides immigrants with the information they need to build connections with their community, adjust quickly to their new lives and help themselves



and their families become fully integrated and contributing members of society.

Visit www.yorkwelcome.ca to find out what information resources are available to benefit you and your employees.

Smoking cessation programs and the ethno-culturally diverse workplace

With over 120 different nationalities and cultural backgrounds represented in York Region¹, creating a workplace smoking cessation program to meet the needs of a diverse workforce can bring challenges. Cultural beliefs with respect to tobacco vary but the toll of smoking-related illness does not².

Tobacco cessation programs and resources may not be accessible to some cultural groups because of differences in language, traditions, religion, social customs, education and socio-economic status². It is essential to understand how ethnicity and culture influence smoking attitudes and behaviour to develop culturally tailored smoking cessation programs. If you are developing a tobacco cessation program for your workplace, consider the following:

- Cultural attitudes, values toward tobacco
- Gender, language, education level, socio-economic status
- Ability to communicate
- Group participation in program planning
- Involvement of ethnic, immigrant and multi-cultural organizations²



York Region Community and Health Services Department, Tobacco-Free Living Program offers resources in English, Farsi, Urdu, and Russian. We also offer a comprehensive guide for smoke-free workplaces: **Good Business... better health**. For more information please call York Region **Health Connection** at 1-800-361-5653 or go to www.york.ca/tobacco

Other multilingual resources:

The Heart and Stroke Foundation
www.heartandstroke.on.ca

The Ministry of Health Promotion
www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/health/smoke_free/quit/default.asp

Smokers' Helpline
www.smokershelpline.ca

Sources:

¹ An Economic Profile of York Region, 2007

² Inventory of Canadian Tobacco Cessation Programs and Resources, Health Canada, 2002



How to effectively manage a multi-generational workforce

Today's workforce is changing. The group of individuals that have made up the bulk of the workplace is nearing retirement, while a new type of worker is entering the workforce, bringing new skills and challenges into the mix.

There are also workers sandwiched in between that have their own generational identity. How can we bridge the gaps between these generations and build on the skills

that each group has to offer to better the workplace as a whole? How can a manager effectively work with four distinct generations in the workplace?

The key is understanding generational differences and implementing strategies that not only reflect these differences but also build healthier environments for this divergent workforce.

Matures 1909-1945	Boomers 1946-1964	Generation X 1965-1980	Millennials Born after 1980
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loyal and respectful workers Possess superb interpersonal skills Focus on quality of work Respect for rules and regulations Very group oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term 'workaholic' was coined for this group Can be very competitive Not concerned with 'why', but rather the end result Titles and promotions are very important Work ethic measured by hours worked, not necessarily productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be prepared to prove your worth – titles not overly important to this group Provide all details, as Xers want to know 'why' Consider contingency plans for projects – Xers often expect the worst Very concerned with work-life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See themselves as individuals, but work well in teams Excellent multi-taskers Prefer information in short bursts Want open, constant communication and positive reinforcement Are interested in work that offers personal fulfillment

Source: Generational Information adapted from York Region HR Services 'Mixing the four generations in the workplace guide', as adapted from 2007 Cam Marston and Learning Communication, LLC.

Keep active at any age

Being active and eating well can reduce your risk of chronic diseases and help you maintain your independence later in life. Consider the following benefits:

- Reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers
- Improved balance and decreased body aches and pains
- Strong bones and muscles resulting in decreased risk of falls and injury
- Reduced stress and increased energy

Visit www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/older/index.html to learn simple ways to incorporate endurance, flexibility, strength and balance activities into your daily routine.



Looking for information on local trails and events promoting physical activity in your community?

Visit:

York Region Physical Activity Network Calendar

www.york.ca/Services/Public+Health+and+Safety/Healthy+Lifestyles/YRPAN+Event+Calendar.htm

Take a Hike Trail Guide

www.york.ca/Services/Environmental/Take+A+Hike.htm

did you know?

York Region's TB Control Program

A worker tells you she has tuberculosis (TB).

What do you do?

When TB is found in your workplace, staff from the York Region TB Control Program will work with you to identify employees who may have been exposed. We can educate employees, arrange TB skin testing, provide onsite screening clinics when large numbers of employees have been exposed, and co-ordinate medical follow-up.

For further information please go to www.york.ca or contact York Region **Health Connection** at **1-800-361-5653**.

UPCOMING HEALTH DAYS

January 2009

Alzheimer Awareness Month
www.alzheimer.ca

Jan. 18-24 National Non-Smoking Week
www.nnsw.ca

Jan. 21 Weedless Wenesday www.cctc.ca

February

Heart Month
www.heartandstroke.ca

March

"Help Fight Liver Disease" Month
www.liver.ca

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
www.colorectal-cancer.ca

National Nutrition Month www.dietitians.ca

Mar. 24 World Tuberculosis Day www.stoptb.ca

April

Dental Health Month
www.cda-adc.ca

National Cancer Month
www.cancer.ca

Apr. 19-25 National Immunization Awareness Week
www.immunize.cpha.ca

what's on!

Economic development in YORK REGION

If you, or your management team, are interested in economic development in the region, you may be interested in the articles and notices of business events and trade missions available at www.yorkeconomicinsights.ca.

Are you developing a workplace wellness program for YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Our Workplace Wellness website provides you with Comprehensive Workplace Wellness information, tools and resources to help get you started.

Visit www.york.ca/workplacewellness to find out why a healthy workplace is a great investment!

Another successful ANNUAL CONFERENCE!

Thank you for helping to make this year's **8th Annual Workplace Wellness Conference, Moose on the Table: Leading a High-Performance Team** a success! A total of 130 representatives from workplaces across York Region participated and obtained tools that focus on how to have courageous conversations and improve their workplace team performance.

Welcome Centre offers services to reduce post-migration stress



Welcome Centre can help decrease the amount of post-migration stress, facilitate settling in Canada, and provide employment support, helping to improve the physical and mental health of newcomers.

Assisting immigrant employees to find the help they require leads to a healthy work environment and has proven to be a win-win for all. Workers are finding help through upgrading their skills in language, trades, professional credentials and other related topics which creates a sense of accomplishment for the employee and in turn leads to an enhanced pool of resources for employers.

For more information on the services available at the Welcome Centre visit www.welcomecentre.ca or call 1-877-761-1155.

Coping with stress in the workplace is not a foreign concept but adding newcomer-related challenges to the mix can lead to a significant increase in the stress load.

Many immigrants may be faced with an array of challenges including culture shock, isolation, employment needs, language barriers and more as they begin to establish and manage new relationships and settle into their new homes.

Many newcomers who have been successful in gaining employment continue to worry about their families' settlement needs such as sponsoring other family members to Canada, getting their health cards or assessing their credentials.

However, the Welcome Centre Immigrant Services in Vaughan can alleviate some of that stress by providing a full range of services for newcomers and immigrants all under one roof.

With funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Welcome Centre provides newcomers and their family members with core immigrant services such as settlement, employment support services, language training and accreditation assistance.

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide

Did you know that **Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide** is available in 12 different languages to help support healthy eating among our diverse Canadian population?

A First Nations, Inuit and Métis version of Canada's Food Guide that reflects the values, traditions and food choices of this population is also available.

You can access your copy of **Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide** from Health Canada's website at: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php

Canada's Food Guide is available in the following languages:

- English
- Arabic
- Farsi (Persian)
- Punjabi
- Spanish
- Tamil
- French
- Chinese (simplified)
- Korean
- Russian
- Tagalog
- Urdu

YORK REGION
Health Connection
Health Information • Education • Counselling
1-800-361-5653
TTY 1-866-252-9933



We welcome your suggestions, ideas and comments. If you have a topic you would like to read about in a future issue, or if you would like to receive an electronic copy of this newsletter please contact us at workplace.wellness@york.ca