

# LHCA/LBGH

## Monthly Wellness Newsletter

May 2004

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### **LBGH Wellness Provider Endorsement**

**Source: LBGH**

The Louisiana Business Group on Health sponsored a search to find a wellness provider for its members. The wellness committee sent out RFPs to several wellness providers locally and nationally to find a company that could provide quality program services for a discount to all LBGH members.

After careful review, Sterling Wellness Solutions was chosen as the endorsed provider because of its comprehensive program options, flexible plan design, reasonable prices and ability to travel to all locations across Louisiana and nationwide. Sterling Wellness Solutions is a Louisiana based company with offices in New Orleans and Crowley, Louisiana.

Sterling Wellness Solutions offers comprehensive wellness services including group risk evaluations, onsite health screenings, preventive lab testing, individual consultations, health risk appraisals, health education programs, seminars, disease management, drug screenings, and ergonomic programs. Their lab and screening services are offered at a significant discount (compared to physician office visit charges) and may qualify as an expense towards an employer's group health insurance program. Their goal for every client company is to reduce healthcare costs and keep individuals out of the hospital by improving the employee's quality of life, decreasing absenteeism and increasing productivity, morale and longevity.

***The LBGH has negotiated a 10% discount for all members who utilize the services of Sterling Wellness Solutions.***

Please contact Cheryl Tolbert [cheryl@lbgh.org](mailto:cheryl@lbgh.org) if you would like more information about this membership benefit.

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### **Pre-Work Stretch and Tone Programs**

**Source: "Health Promotion: Sourcebook for Small Businesses" (Chapter Eight: Ideas at Work)**

Looking for that program that might just push some of those who are wondering "why wellness at work?" A pre-work stretch and tone program might just be the answer. Moreover, in a factory, warehouse, or assembly line setting this just could be the ticket.

This program is focused on reducing the frequency and severity of muscular sprains and strains. They have been shown to relieve muscle tension and mental stress and promote team spirit. It is important to appoint a group leader that is enthusiastic about the program and can generate excitement within the company or work group.

What kinds of exercises need to be done? Exercises that provide a progressive means of loosening, stretching, shaping, and strengthening the major muscle groups involved in work. Look at the type of work that is being done and the muscle group involved. Check out some stretch and tone books from the library and find exercises for these muscle groups.

## Questions to Ask - That will help you design your program

- What time is best to do the program (after morning safety meeting, after team meeting, during shift change?)
- What is the most convenient place to offer the program?
- What exercise can be completed without having to lie on the floor?
- Is there wall space available for using during some of the exercises?
- Are there chairs in the room for some exercises?

## How do you sell the concept to team members?

First, ask your participants to think about how important it is for athletes to stretch before an athletic event. Now ask them why their work is any different from an athletic event. See the connection? With a little luck you might even find someone in the group that has stretched for years to avoid injury and can serve as a great role model.

*These exercises only take 10-15 minutes.*

## Some important things to remember:

- Before the start of the session always ask if anyone has an old injury or preconditions that might need a physician approval before exercise.
- Even if employees don't want to participate they should stand by their chairs while the others are exercising.
- Remind participants to do all exercises in a gentle and relaxed manner.
- Move through each stretch to a point where you feel mild tension and if an employee feels pain they should stop.
- Do all movements in a slow controlled fashion and maintain normal breathing throughout the routine.

The program might be led by an exercise leader or you could make a home video of a group doing the exercises and use it to help other groups enjoy the program.

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## It's Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

Source: AAFA

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) declares May as "National Asthma and Allergy Month." The month-long public awareness program is officially recognized nationally by President George W. Bush.

Nearly one out of five (50 million) Americans suffers from allergies and more than six percent of Americans (17 million) suffer from asthma. Asthma and other allergic disorders are chronic diseases for which there is currently no cure. Each year during May -- a peak season for allergies -- physicians, patients, government health organizations and others join with AAFA to raise awareness about these serious health conditions.

Allergic disorders are characterized by a faulty immune system that overreacts to different allergens that people often inhale, ingest or touch. Asthma is an inflammatory disease of the airways that causes shortness of breath, breathing trouble and other symptoms and is often triggered by a person's allergic reactions. In extreme cases, asthma attacks and certain allergic reactions can cause death.

Over the past 50 years, much has been done to help people manage these diseases, but asthma and allergies continue to cause severe limitations for people all year long. Research by AAFA found that asthma and allergies cost the U.S. economy more than \$20 billion each year in terms of medical care, lost productivity from 12 million school days missed and 12.5 million workdays missed.