

TO: Maine Worksite Wellness Initiative (MWWI) Year 2 (2010-11) Members and Prospective Members
FR: R.H. Ross, Convener
DA: 15 July 2011
RE: **Year 2 Meeting 8 Write-up**
Thursday, 23 June 2011, 3:00-4:30pm, Pharmacy Building, Room 217, 16 Stevens Avenue, Portland, Maine

Present: Tom Algozzine, Tom Downing, Jaime Nicole Laliberte, Lynn Lavorgna-Landry, Del Leonard, Bill McPeck, Dean Paterson, Robert Ross, Willow Sherwood, Amy Wagner, Phyllis Wolfe. Regrets: Larry Catlett, Abigail S. DiPasquale, Jonathan Klane.

Robert Ross hosted Meeting 8, and its webinar component, at the University of New England Pharmacy Building, Room 217, 16 Stevens Avenue, Portland, Maine. Meeting 8 was dedicated to Mental Health in the Workplace. **NB:** for all Year 1 MWWI docs go to <http://www.une.edu/mhprc/projects/mwwi/index.cfm>, for Year 2 to <http://www.une.edu/mhprc/projects/mwwi/yeartwo.cfm>.

- 1. Roundtable.** Bob Ross opened the Roundtable announcing that this was the eighth and final meeting of the Year 2 Maine Worksite Wellness Initiative and alerting members that they would soon be receiving a survey by which Year 2 will be evaluated and Year 3 anticipated. A discussion and affirmation ensued of making “workplace culture” a subject of one or more Year 3 meetings. Phyllis Wolfe, who developed and managed the employee wellness program at Bath Iron Works from 2001 to 2009 (sorry if I am a year off on either side), explained that she was now working with Tom Downing and Dean Paterson at the Lifeline Workplace Wellness Program at Maine Medical (http://www.mmc.org/lifeline_body.cfm?id=7021) and, therewith, consulting with Cumberland county on its worksite wellness program. Del Leonard reported attending a BLS training on Falls protection and Scaffolding at which “many trades were represented, e.g. solar panels” (for U. Maine’s Fall Protection and Ladder Safety Program see <http://www.uma.edu/fallprotection.html>, for OSHA’s <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/scaffolding/index.html>). Lynn Lavorgna-Landry reported on Maine General Workplace Health’s Work and Stress seminar, which she had staged that morning with Healthy People of the Kennebec Valley. The HeartMath technique (<http://www.heartmath.org/>) was taught to participants. Maine General senior management has just approved teaching the technique, first to employees and then to patients. Tom Downing previewed his MMC Lifeline Workplace Wellness Program’s “Depression in the Workplace” conference for employers and employees coming up September 20, 2011 at the Augusta Civic Center. Keynote speakers will include Work Limitations Questionnaire creator Debra Lerner, PhD (<http://sackler.tufts.edu/Faculty-and-Research/Find-People-and-Research/Faculty-Profile.aspx?id=96>) and John Weaver, PsyD (www.thepreventionofdepression.com/). Mary Allen Linderman’s “Coffee by Design” (<http://www.wmpg.org/?UWprofile=6>), which will be featured there, offers a remarkable case study, Tom noted, of a mental health-friendly worksite. Dean Paterson added that the Lifeline Program’s TA model, which works with Maine’s large employers, is to “teach our clients to fish” over a period, say, of 18 months, and thus turn a client into a colleague capable of employing their own Risk management coordinator and providing their own coaching. Bill McPeck reported that the summer Taskforce he had prefigured at Meeting 6 was now constituted of himself, Willow Sherwood, of the Wellness Council of Maine, and Amy Wagner, of Healthy Communities of the Capital Area (See Year 2 Meeting 6 and 7 Write-ups). The Taskforce will elaborate the employer premium reduction/tax credit concept in time to inform the decision, to be made this fall, concerning what a Maine employer will have to do to get the premium discount/tax credit. The goal is to create a document for the Bureau of Insurance which describes “best thinking” on the subject of how-to-qualify, and not just for the self-insured employers but also for the community-rated ones. Since the Bureau of Insurance ruling will likely be made by the Commissioner in September, the Taskforce has only the summer to work. Bill also noted that he’d been invited by the psychologist Dr. Jan Sinnott (e.g. see <http://www.alibris.com/search/books/author/Sinnott,%20Jan%20D/aid/4642185>, <http://ifp.nyu.edu/?p=16950>) of Towson University to contribute a chapter on positive psychology and worksite wellness to a book she will publish.
- 2. Briefing.** Tom Downing, MSB, director of the MMC Lifeline Workplace Wellness Program, briefed members on “The Role of Employers in Early Intervention of Mental Illness and Depression.” He began with the business case for intervention (medical cost, productivity); proceeded to the widespread misconception concerning mental illness and depression (they are as much a medical condition as physical illnesses), types which present in the workplace (e.g. anxiety and bipolar disorders), the continuum concept, direct cost (beginning with healthcare services: 2-4 x more use by untreated depressed employees) and indirect cost impact (including >absenteeism, <presenteesim @ \$44b/ann lost productivity for depressed employees), the good news (e.g. 80% of all treated for depression have positive outcomes), and the Maine business picture; and concluded with results from an employer outreach program and survey conducted by MMC’s Lifeline Workplace Wellness Program consisting in

a four-county web-based employer (n=118) and employee (n=355) survey and cost analysis of mental health benefits/services. Findings included that Employee assistance programs (EAPs) were an information source but not a solution to mental health issues; wellness programs were primarily a feature of larger companies; mental health was usually not part of wellness programs; mental health is a high priority but difficult for employers to address; employers support the inclusion of mental health with wellness but with focus on resiliency rather than stress reduction. A recent survey of five large Maine employers conducted by the PIER Program in the Greater Portland area, Tom reported, which sought to collect mental health claims, EAP utilization, prescription drug claims, absenteeism, worker's compensation, and short and long disability data, found that high quality data is hard to collect, Insurance carriers vary in how they report information, trend reports are difficult to produce and analyze, data on mental health impact on EAP services, worker's comp, and STD/LTD is scarce. In effect then, data availability varies widely; pharmacy utilization and employee mental illness are strongly related; the larger, self-funded employers have greater capacity to gather and analyze data; and little information exists with which to analyze the impact of mental illness on indirect cost. Thus there is a clear need to elevate mental health related incidence and cost to the level of chronic diseases. Tom noted web resources including www.samhsa.org and the Mental Health Association of Minnesota as www.mentalhealthmn.org.

3. **Presentation.** Dean Paterson, R.N., consultant at the MMC Lifeline Workplace Wellness Program, in a presentation titled "It's Not Where You Work that Matters," reported a recent analysis of Maine healthcare services claims data. Reviewing categorical diagnoses on claims, EAP claims data, Worker's Compensation claims, and presenteeism/productivity data, she found that the top five Rx claims were mental health-related and often involved employee dependents. Dean related her findings to variation in workplace culture, conducive and not to employee mental health and productivity. Sequellae to impaired workplace culture include elevated stress, exacerbated chronic disease symptoms, unhealthy lifestyle choices, productivity loss, increased hospitalization, injury, and absenteeism, she noted. Dean concluded citing resources including Dee Edington's *Culture Counts* (Welcoa Expert Interview, 2009) and WELLCOA President David Hunnicut's *Creating a Culture of Wellness* (2009).

Expect, if you will, to receive the Year 2 MWWI Member Canvass in late July, results from which will inform Year 3 (2011-12) Meeting 1 (Year 3 agenda planning) to be scheduled on a Thursday in late September or early October. Meantime, very best wishes for the 2011 summer months. R.H. Ross