

Northwestern Health Unit
Healthy Meetings and Events Policy
2017



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EVALUATION SUMMARY

Healthy Meetings and Events Policy

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Introduction

This report summarizes the evaluation of the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) Health Meetings and Events (HME) policy. The purpose of the policy is to create supportive environments for healthy eating and physical activity at Health Unit-led meetings and events.

This policy applies to all situations where NWHU staff are organizing and/or planning for community events, meetings, workshops, or educational sessions for NWHU employees, management, Board of Health members, volunteers, clients, guests, and partners.

The NWHU will facilitate healthy meetings and events designed to always take into consideration healthy eating, physical activity and environmental impact:

1. Healthy choices are provided when food and beverages are offered at NWHU meetings and events.
2. Opportunities for physical activity are incorporated into all NWHU meetings and events lasting longer than one hour.
3. Safe food handling practices and environmentally friendly options are considered at all meetings and events.

This evaluation is to assess to what extent the policy has been followed, and the impact it has had on NWHU staff, since its original approval in 2012.

Methods

Data for the evaluation was collected from NWHU meeting minutes from August 2012 to December 2015 and staff input in 2015 and 2016.

SharePoint meeting minutes audit

Staff and Board of Health members were asked to evaluate every meeting and event organized by the NWHU that used the standard agency templates for agendas and minutes. In this evaluation participants were asked if the meeting conformed to the Healthy Meetings and Events guidelines. At the end of the identified time period, NWHU program support staff completed an audit of SharePoint, the NWHU intranet, to determine the total number of meetings/events held by NWHU as well the responses received to the question of HME policy compliance.

All Staff survey

Annually, NWHU staff are asked to complete an anonymous online survey. In 2015, several questions were included in the All Staff online survey to assess staff awareness of and compliance to the HME policy:

- Are you aware of the Healthy Meeting and Events policy?
- Have you followed the Healthy Meeting and Events policy at monthly office meetings or program team meetings?

The 2016 All Staff online survey included impact evaluation of the HME policy. NWHU staff were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements:

- I abide by the Healthy Meeting and Events policy.
- NWHU supports and enforces the Healthy Meetings and Events policy.

They were also asked to rate the level of change with regard to how the NWHU Healthy Meeting and Events policy has impacted them personally on the following items:

- Fruit and vegetable intake at NWHU meetings/events.
- Water intake at NWHU meetings/events.
- Time spent sitting at NWHU meetings/events.
- Time spent being active at NWHU meetings/events.
- Use of reusable containers at NWHU meeting/events.

Data from both online staff surveys was analyzed using Fluid Survey.

Results

Through an audit of the NWHU SharePoint intranet, it was determined that 604 meetings and events were held between August 2012 and December 2015. The minutes of those meetings note that 295 (48.8%) conformed to the guidelines and 3 (0.5%) did not follow the policy guidelines. Additionally, it is important to note that for 306 (50.6%) of meetings the staff involved did not provide a response to the question of HME policy compliance.

SharePoint meeting minutes audit

Did our meeting conform to the NWHU Healthy Meeting Guidelines?		
Response	Percentage (%)	Count
Yes	48.8	295
No	0.5	3
Don't Know	50.6	306
Total Responses		604

All Staff survey

In 2015, all staff were asked to complete an anonymous online survey. Of the 106 staff that answered the question regarding awareness of the policy, 101 (95.3%) said that they were aware of it and 5

(4.7%) said they were not aware of this policy. Regarding compliance to the policy, 103 (95.4%) of the 108 respondents indicated that they followed the policy and 5 (4.7%) did not.

Are you aware of the Healthy Meeting and Events Policy?		
Response	Percentage (%)	Count
Yes	95.3	101
No	4.7	5
Total Responses		106

Have you followed the Healthy Meeting and Events Policy at monthly office meetings or program team meetings?		
Response	Percentage (%)	Count
Yes	95.4	103
No	4.7	5
Total Responses		108

In 2016, of the 100 respondents 100% indicated that they strongly agree or agree that they abide by the HME policy. When questioned as to whether they felt the NWHU supports and enforces the HME policy 93 (96.9%) of the 96 respondents strongly agreed or agreed, and 3 (3.1%) disagreed.

When asked to indicate the level of change they had experienced in their personal fruit and vegetable consumption at NWHU meetings as a result of the HME policy 59 (60.2%) of the 98 respondents felt there had been no change, 39 (39.8%) noted an increase in consumption. Sixty-two (63.3%) of respondents have noted no change in their water intake while 36 (36.7%) felt they had drank more water at NWHU meetings. Half of the 98 staff respondents indicated no change in the amount of time they spent sitting at meetings and events, 30 (30.6%) noticed that had spent less time sitting, and 19 (19.4%) felt they had spent more time sitting since the policy was implemented. Fifty-seven (58.2%) staff members indicated they'd experienced no change in the amount of time spent being active during NWHU meetings/events, 40 (40.8%) had been more active and 1 (1.0%) individual felt they had been less active. When looking at environmentally sustainable practices at NWHU meetings/events, 72 (74.2%) of the 97 respondents noted no change in the use of reusable containers, 24 (24.7%) felt they had been used more and 1 (1.0%) felt they had been used less often.

I abide by the Healthy Meeting and Events policy.		
Response	Percentage (%)	Count
Strongly agree	28.0	28
Agree	72.0	72
Disagree	0.0	0
Strongly disagree	0.0	0
Total responses		100

NWHU supports and enforces the Healthy Meeting and Events policy.		
Response	Percentage (%)	Count
Strongly agree	32.3	31
Agree	64.6	62
Disagree	3.1	3
Strongly disagree	0.0	0
Total responses		96

Please rate the level of change with regard to how the NWHU Healthy Meetings and Events Policy has impacts you personally on the following items:			
		Percentage (%)	Count
Fruit and vegetable intake at NWHU meeting/events			
	More	39.8	39
	No Change	60.2	59
	Less	0.0	0
Water intake at NWHU meetings/events			
	More	36.7	36
	No Change	63.3	62
	Less	0.0	0
Time spent sitting at NWHU meetings/events			
	More	19.4	19
	No Change	50.0	49
	Less	30.6	1
Time spent being active at NWHU meetings/events			
	More	40.8	40
	No Change	58.2	57
	Less	1.0	30
Use of reusable containers at NWHU meeting/events			
	More	24.7	24
	No Change	74.2	72
	Less	1.0	1

Discussion

Between August 2012 and December 2015, 604 NWHU organized meetings and events were evaluated for compliance to the Healthy Meetings and Events policy. An audit of NWHU meeting minutes indicated that 295 of the total meetings/events (48.84%) conformed to the HME policy, while 3 (0.5%) did not. For those 298 meetings where the minutes did in fact indicate HME policy compliance the level of compliance was very high at 99.0%.

The minutes for over half of the meetings documented on SharePoint did not indicate whether or not the meeting had or had not complied with the HME policy. This could be because minutes were not completed properly, the minute taker did not want to record non-adherence, or because meetings were less than an hour therefore food and water was not provided and the requirement of providing physical activity did not apply. This is important to note as it is a significant number of meetings for which we are uncertain of the level of adherence to the policy. The meeting minutes were audited from August 2012 to December 2015, but this number was not broken down by year and so, we cannot comment on changes in compliance over time.

Taking a deeper look into the staff perspective of the HME policy, the 2015 All Staff survey indicated a high level of staff awareness of and compliance to the policy – 95.3% and 95.4%, respectively. The 2016 All Staff survey again indicated high compliance to the HME policy with 100% of staff respondents noting that they abide by the HME policy. Staff respondents perceive there to be a high level of organizational support for the HME policy with 96.9% agreeing that the organization supports and enforces the policy. Perceived organizational support is positively linked to an increase of affective organizational commitment, which refers to employee willingness to pursue organizations goals and positive emotional attachment to their organization (Kurtessis, JN. *et al.*, 2015). When looking at the NWHU HME policy evaluation results, a similar positive relationship exists between perceived organizational support for the HME policy and staff buy-in with 95.4% and 100% of NWHU all staff survey respondents indicating in 2015 and 2016, respectively, that they abide by the HME policy.

When asked to rate the level of change they had personally experienced with regard to HME policy the majority of staff noted they'd experienced 'no change' in all topic areas included on the survey – healthy eating and water intake, time spent seated and time spent being active at meetings, as well as the use of reusable containers. It is worth noting that some individuals who indicated they have personally experienced 'no change' as a result of the HME policy may have done so because they were already practicing the positive behaviours meant to be enhanced through the HME policy.

The area that respondents indicated the highest level of personal change was in the amount of time spent active at meetings with 40.8% noting an increase; 38.9% and 36.7% indicated they had noticed an increase in their fruit and vegetable consumption, and water intake, respectively, at NWHU meetings; and, 24.7% of respondents have noticed that reusable containers are being used more often. When asked about time spent sitting, 30.6% of respondents felt they had spent less time and 19.4% felt they had spent more time sitting at NWHU meetings and events. This 19.4% is important to note since the other categories had either 0% or 1% of respondents indicate a negative impact as a result of the HME policy. It seems unlikely that the HME policy would have led to increase in time spent sitting at meetings, and could be the result of a change in question pattern that lead staff to continue to interpret 'more' rather than 'less' as the positive response for the question of time being spent sitting during meetings. It could also indicate that people feel they are generally spending more time in meetings, not necessarily that they feel they are spending a larger proportion of their meeting times seated.

Conclusion

Results of the SharePoint meeting minutes audit, and the 2015 and 2016 all staff survey indicate a high level of compliance to the NWHU Healthy Meeting and Events policy. While most staff have indicated that the HME policy has had no change on their health meeting behaviours, such as healthy eating, water consumption, and physical activity, many people did notice positive changes as a result and very few staff experienced any negative behaviour change as a result of the HME policy. Health unit staff and managers should be encouraged to continue to follow the HME policy and to document their compliance using the NWHU meeting templates. Moving forward, it may also be helpful to include an additional field on the meeting template that allows staff to indicate when their meeting is less than an hour in length and that the guidelines were not applied.

The NWHU should continue to support and enforce the HME policy and look for opportunities to share the policy, as well as our experience, with other workplaces, municipalities and organizations looking to model healthy behaviours in their meetings and events.

Source

Kurtessis, JN. *et al.* (2015) Perceived Organizational Support: A Meta-Analytic Evaluation of Organizational Support Theory. *Journal of Management*. Retrieved from: <http://classweb.uh.edu/eisenberger/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2015/04/Kurtessis-2015.pdf>.



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