How Tobacco Use Hurts an Employer’s Bottom Line

What is the single most cost-effective health benefit you can provide to your employees? Tobacco use cessation interventions.¹

Tobacco use results in huge costs to the nation as a whole and to employers in particular. The estimated costs to the health care system for treating smoking-related illness are more than $369 Million for Utah, and $96 billion for the U.S.² Smokers consume more health care resources, experience greater absenteeism, and tend to be less productive while at work.

Health Care Resources

- Smoking and smoking-related illnesses annually cost employers $2,132 per smoker in excess medical expenses.³
- On average, tobacco users cost company pharmaceutical plans twice as much as non-users.⁴
- Compared to nonsmokers, smokers are 50 percent more likely to be hospitalized.⁵

Absenteism

- Smoking and smoking-related illnesses annually cost employers $2,312 per smoker in lost productivity.⁶
- Smokers on average miss 6.2 days of work per year due to sickness. Non-smokers miss 3.9 days of work per year.⁷
- Eliminating smoking decreases disability time by 2.5 years for men and 1.9 years for women.⁸

Productivity

- Smokers have about two times more lost production time per week than nonsmokers.⁹
- It takes approximately seven minutes to smoke a cigarette. Employees who take four ten-minute smoking breaks a day will work one month less per year than workers who do not take smoking breaks.¹⁰

Workers’ Compensation

- Businesses pay an average of $2,189 in workers’ compensation costs for smokers, compared with $176 for nonsmokers. Smokers do not experience more injuries but they do not heal as quickly.¹¹

⁴ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (adjusted for 2008 dollars).
⁵ http://www.dhss.mo.gov/SmokingAndTobacco/EmployersToolkit.pdf.