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HEALTH ACTION ALLIANCE

de Beaumont
BOLD SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES™

Healthier Businesses Start with Healthier Communities

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Information for this report was repurposed from:

The de Beaumont Foundation (2021). Seven Ways Businesses Can Align with Public Health for Bold Action and Innovation. Prepared by The Institute for Health and Productivity Studies at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the de Beaumont Foundation. https://debeaumont.org/businesspublichealth/

Survey Methodology:
This poll was conducted between May 14-May 17, 2021 among a sample of 2200 Adults by Morning Consult. The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of Adults based on gender, educational attainment, age, race, and region. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

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About the de Beaumont Foundation
The de Beaumont Foundation advances policy, builds partnerships, and strengthens public health to create communities where people can achieve their best possible health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation has been working closely with state and local health departments and other partners to provide practical resources to address immediate needs and advocate for sustained investment in public health.

For more information, please visit debeaumont.org.

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About the Health Action Alliance
The Health Action Alliance is a joint initiative of the Ad Council, the Business Roundtable, the CDC Foundation, the de Beaumont Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation—in partnership with Meteorite. The Health Action Alliance works to strengthen and accelerate the business community's response to COVID-19, address health inequities and strengthen public health infrastructure.

For more information, please visit healthaction.org.

Health Action Alliance Founding Partners

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The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the power of the business and public health communities when they work together to solve problems. Driven by a desire to reopen safely and revitalize the economy, businesses joined forces with public health and community leaders to share best practices, coordinate strategies and develop approaches to keep customers and employees healthy and safe.

THE NEED: Healthier Commumnities Need Healthier Businesses

Over the past year, the link between employee and customer health and business prosperity came into sharp focus. But even before the pandemic, employee health and safety was a bottom line concern for America's businesses. Poor worker health and illness-related absences cost U.S. employers an estimated $575 billion and 1.5 billion days of lost productivity in 2019 alone.

While many businesses create programs and policies to improve the health of workers, they fail to address the broader community health conditions where workers live, work and play. Upwards of 70% of one's health status is driven by the social and environmental factors that surround them. As the nation recovers from the pandemic, community health, not just employee health, should be a strategic consideration for every employer.

Good Health Is Good Business: Check out this report detailing the value proposition for businesses to improve community health.

Businesses play many roles in the communities where they operate – as engines of economic growth, as employers, and as sources of products and services that can help a community thrive. Likewise, communities play a role in determining how well a business operates. Healthier communities support a stronger pool of workers and a thriving local economy to drive business growth.

Businesses and customers alike are beginning to acknowledge that healthier businesses start with healthier communities.

A majority of adults say private companies should be involved in encouraging employees (**70%**) and consumers (**61%**) to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Four in five adults (82%) think employers have a responsibility to invest in the health and well-being of their local communities.

Three quarters (75%) of adults say it is important that the companies they purchase from engage in Corporate Social Responsibility practices, including investing in the health of communities.

More than **2 in 3 adults** believe the following areas are important for the companies they purchase from to invest in:

- Food Security **82%**
- Education **81%**
- Mental Health **80%**
- Housing **74%**
- Child Care **74%**
- Substance Use **71%**
- Transportation **67%**

THE OPPORTUNITY: Business Actions Build Healthier Communities

Employees, customers, and other key stakeholders are looking to businesses to help build healthier communities, and businesses need healthier communities to thrive. So, what actions can businesses take to contribute to healthier communities?

Business leaders are powerful instruments for change at the local level. No matter where your company is starting from, these three approaches will advance your efforts to improve employee and customer health, deliver on customer expectations, and show other stakeholders how much your business cares about your community's health. By working across sectors, businesses can help build partnerships and prioritize investments that improve community health and wellness, inside and outside the workplace.

1.) Determine what issues are causing employee absenteeism, retention failures, stress, and anxiety. Work with public health leaders to map health solutions to these challenges.

Survey your employees to help you better understand the root causes of poor health such as absenteeism, productivity losses, or turnover. Then, assess whether there are public health solutions that can help address these challenges. Is lack of childcare in the community an issue? Do employees have to travel long distances to see health care providers because the local hospital closed? What about struggles with anxiety or other mental health problems? Once you've identified some of the challenges facing your employees, talk with health leaders in your community about public health resources and strategies. They may have ideas about how to work together to address the root causes.

2.) Build partnerships in your community, and invest in solutions that meet both employee and community needs.

As employers, you have a great deal of influence with local leaders. Leverage that influence to build support for programs that address housing, childcare, food insecurity and emotional support your community needs. In the long run, those efforts will help with morale, absenteeism and your ability to find qualified employees.

Consider identifying someone in your organization – director level or higher – who can serve as liaison to anchor institutions in your community (e.g., large hospitals and hospital systems; corporate headquarters; municipal and state governments; school systems; and colleges and universities) and with local public health officials.They can also be tapped to meet with city councils, county boards of supervisors, and state legislatures.

These liaisons can function as a connector, facilitator, and convener and can give voice to the health concerns of your employees. They can also bring community concerns to the C-Suite to see if there is some action your business can take in support of already developed initiatives.

3.) Tell your local and state governments that supporting public health is good for business and must be a priority.

There is funding available to support expanded public health initiatives related to COVID-19. These initiatives can help build the public health infrastructure in communities that will last well-beyond the pandemic. Encourage your local leaders to leverage these new resources and support sustained investments in public health.

In addition to encouraging state officials to take advantage of new funding, consider working in partnership on a specific public health initiative as you focus your advocacy.

Policy is a critical tool for supporting healthy communities. Below is a list of nine policy areas identified by CityHealth, an initiative of the de Beaumont Foundation and Kaiser Permanente. These evidence-based approaches can help millions of people live longer, healthier lives and all meet the following criteria: 1) largely under city jurisdictional authority, 2) backed by evidence, 3) pragmatic, including indications of bipartisan support, and 4) replicable, having been successfully implemented in at least one other U.S. jurisdiction.

Use these issue areas as a starting point for your community investment and advocacy efforts:

- **Affordable housing** and inclusionary zoning that requires developers to set aside a portion of housing units for low- and moderate-income residents;
- **Earned sick leave** that reduces the spread of contagious illnesses, increase employment and income stability, and save money in health care costs;
- **Food safety and restaurant inspections** that require food establishments to publicly post food safety inspection grades, empower consumers, reduce foodborne illness, and save health care costs;
- **Complete streets policies** that prioritize safety by incorporating the needs of people using all forms of transportation, from walking, to biking, to driving, or taking the bus;
- **Safer alcohol sales policies** that address high density of alcohol outlets to decrease crime, increase safety, and reduce spending on health care and criminal justice costs;
- **Healthy food procurement** that ensures food sold and served in city buildings meets basic nutritional standards, provides more residents with affordable and healthy food choices, and may reduce medical costs associated with obesity;
- **Smoke-free indoor air** that protects non-smokers from the harmful effects of tobacco and reduces smokers' consumption of tobacco;
- **High-quality and accessible universal pre-kindergarten** that improves children's school readiness and success; and
- **Tobacco 21** (now adopted nationwide) that establishes a minimum legal age of 21 for the sale of tobacco, thus reducing the number of young people using these products and greatly reduces the risk for addiction and disease.

For more information about these public health approaches and how to support them in your community, visit www.cityhealth.org.

Need help? We're here to answer your questions and help you develop a relationship with public health partners. To schedule a call with one of our team members, email hello@healthaction.org.