

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

TOPIC:	Workplace Health & Wellness Policy
POLICY NUMBER:	42
DATE APPROVED:	October 17, 2017 (#2017-144)
DATE REVISED:	December 14, 2020 (#2020-170)

The Municipality of the County of Antigonish is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for its employees at all municipal work sites.

1. Title

1.1. This policy may be referred to as the “Workplace Health and Wellness Policy”.

2. Purpose

2.1. A healthy workplace leads to improved satisfaction, employee morale, and a more effective workplace. The purpose of this policy is to encourage, support and offer health related programs that will assist employees and elected officials in improving their own physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

3. Objective

3.1. The objectives of this policy are to:

- i Improve understanding of workplace issues that impact the health and wellbeing of municipal employees and elected officials;
- ii Provide a work environment that will foster employee health and wellbeing;
- iii Build the knowledge, skills, and ability of employees to take control over their wellbeing by helping individuals become actively involved in improving their personal health.

4. Interpretation

4.1. In this policy:

- i Physical Environment (workplace) refers to health, comfort and safety factors of a workplace such as noise levels, toxic substances, air quality, light levels, equipment and design of workspace.
- ii Health Practices refers to individual lifestyle practices that affect health such as physical activity, eating habits, sleeping habits, as well as smoking, alcohol and drug/substance use.
- iii Social Environment refers to psychosocial factors of a workplace that affect health and employee stress levels such as reasonableness of deadlines, organization and design of work, opportunities to influence how tasks are done, adequacy of training and development and the interplay of home and work responsibilities.

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- iv Personal Resources refers to the means by which individuals cope with stress the sense of control they have over their work and health and the perception there is support available during times of illness, distress or unhappiness.

5. Policy Guidelines

- 5.1. The policy applies to all full-time employees and elected officials of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish
- 5.2. The Municipality of the County of Antigonish recognizes that its ability to achieve its goals and objectives is dependent upon the wellbeing of employees and elected officials.
- 5.3. Acknowledges that the key elements of a healthy workplace include the physical environment, health practices, social environment and personal resources. It is also recognized that these broad-based factors are interdependent and must be considered as parts of a holistic approach to a healthy workplace and employee wellbeing.
- 5.4. To facilitate this policy **[the municipality]** will:
 - i provide a healthy and safe physical work environment;
 - ii administer program funds and provide support for a healthy workplace to the workplace wellness team;
 - iii facilitate an employee's efforts to make improvements in their health practices;
 - iv organize wellness education sessions relating to mental, physical and emotional wellness;
 - v improve employee access to healthy snack options in the workplace by providing healthy food options during events, meetings, etc.;
 - vi provide access to the Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) which provides confidential help for a wide range of concerns at no cost or minimal costs to the employee;
 - vii encourage friendly fitness and wellness competitions; and
 - viii develop resources for employees to help them cope with the social and professional aspects of their lives.
- 5.5. Full-time permanent municipal employees and elected officials are eligible to receive a financial incentive of up to \$200.00 per year towards a membership, equipment or program that is intended to improve the employee's wellness. Eligible expenses / programs include:
 - i Memberships & Classes- This includes memberships and entry fees for gyms, aquatic centres, specific sport Provincial Sport Organizations, organized sports groups, class(es) and team fees.
 - ii Equipment – Physical Activity Equipment such as home gym equipment, outdoor activity (i.e.: bikes, kayaks, walking poles), and personal fitness devices (i.e.: fitbits, smart watches), supportive equipment for mobility and health aids.

- iii Athletic Apparel and Footwear- Clothing and footwear to support physical activity.
 - iv Holistic Health Supports– Therapies that support wellness to include massage and natural medicine consultations.
- 5.6. Completion of application form accompanied by the **original** receipt and any supplementary documentation is required for reimbursement. Supplementary documentation may include a note from a health care provider.
- 5.7. Participation in the program is voluntary.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff with regard to the Workplace Health and Wellness Policy:

- i Workplace Wellness Team at the Municipality of the County of Antigonish will be the **OHS and Wellness Committee**. The OHS and Wellness committee consists of a group of volunteers who are interested in and committed to enhancing the health and wellbeing of employees. The OHS and Wellness Committee will:
 - (a) Assess employee wellness needs by actively seeking input from employees, Council and managers as well as with Staff Engagement Committee;
 - (b) Develop and implement wellness initiatives to address the needs of elected officials and employees;
 - (c) Provide information that can support decisions to participate in health promotion programming;
 - (d) Encourage and actively seek input from council, employees and managers in regards to wellness needs;
 - (e) Review and revise human resource policies that impact employees' health to ensure that they support and are consistent with the Workplace Health and Wellness Policy.
- ii Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities:
 - (a) Keep employees up to date on healthy workplace activities and programs;
 - (b) Support and encourage employee involvement in the wellness program as a component of employee involvement in professional development;
 - (c) Contribute ideas, opinions and expertise to the work of the OHS & Wellness committee;
 - (d) Participate in the program, activities, and resources provided through the wellness program and provide healthy food options for meetings, training and other events associated with the municipality.

7. Communication, Training and Implementation

7.1. A healthy workplace policy requires department wide participation. Employee participation can include developing, implementing and reviewing health actions and policies, involvement in planning lifestyle health promotion programs at work, identifying problems, devising solutions and then implementing and evaluating these solutions.

- i Employees are encouraged to participate in any or all programs that are made available to them and that help them meet their individual and collective wellness needs.
- ii On an annual basis, council and employees will be surveyed to determine which wellness initiatives are important to them. These results will be compiled and analyzed by the OHS & Wellness Team to develop sessions and initiatives for the coming year.
- iii Any workplace wellness initiatives will be communicated through email and departmental promotion.

8. Evaluation

8.1. The workplace wellness policy will be evaluated through use of data and trends indicating outcomes. A program review will be conducted on an annual basis by the OHS Committee and a report provided to the Senior Leadership Team and Municipal Council to determine if employee workplace wellness needs are being met. The Program will be formally evaluated every 3/5 years.