

## American Heart Association/American Stroke Association

Company Web site: <http://www.americanheart.org>

### CEO's message:

Heart disease and stroke are the number one and three causes of death, respectively. As the American Heart Association works to reduce death, disability and risk, we know ground is being lost in such areas as childhood obesity and adult physical activity. Therefore, we have committed to two initiatives impact these numbers.



**John Meiner, CEO**

First, we launched a collaborative initiative with the Clinton Foundation to stop the increase in childhood obesity and then to reduce these numbers. We realize there are many impacts in a child's life. Since solutions won't be easy, we are partnering with schools, industry (restaurant, beverage, snack food, etc.), healthcare and parents and kids. We have already seen a decrease in high calorie beverages and snacks sold in schools! Visit <http://www.healthiergeneration.org> for additional details and tools.

Of course, one of our more challenging initiatives may be to impact adult physical activity. Each year, we kick off our activities with the National Start! Walking at Work Day in April. While this is a great opportunity to bring attention to need for adults to be more physically active, it can't stop there. We are also partnering with employers from across the country through our START! at Work online resources. In fact, our employees have embraced the campaign and it is being implemented in each of our Ohio offices.

Solutions will not be easy, but the American Heart Association looks forward to providing leadership and partnership opportunities to Ohio companies interested in addressing these growing concerns.

### Key components of your company's employee wellness program:

AHA research has found that worksite wellness programs benefit employers & employees by fostering higher productivity, lower absenteeism, higher job satisfaction and commitment among employees. The Great Rivers Affiliate Start! at Work Committee is dedicated to providing activities, resources and tools to help fit wellness into the workday for all of our employees.

Leadership is provided in each of our offices, as well as local events and activities. Key components of our internal campaign include:

- Committee promoting wellness throughout the affiliate
- Wellness activities at work
- Dedicated wellness Web site w/ wellness activity tracking, assessments, resources & tools
- Quarterly wellness challenges
- Walking club
- Quarterly participation incentives
- Free personal health coaching (telephonic/online)
- Free nurse line

Of course, to truly impact the prevention of heart disease and stroke, we can't keep these tools a secret. Instead, the American Heart Association has created an online community to help individuals and companies increase their physical activity and better nutrition. Key resources available to companies include:

- National Start! Walking Day materials
- Start! for HR Professionals
- Start! in the News and Media Resources
- Start! Facts
- Start! Fit-Friendly Companies and how your company can be recognized
- Start! Resources for individuals including a supportive online community, walking path information and tips and tricks.

[http://mystartonline.org/mystart\\_community.jsp](http://mystartonline.org/mystart_community.jsp)

### **Biggest changes your company's seen since implementing employee wellness programs:**

With so many offices, our first challenge was identifying a leader in each office. These leaders have had a tremendous impact on our efforts. They created office-specific activities or challenges. Most importantly, they provide a "face" to our campaign and have greatly impacted our participation numbers.