

WELLNESS POLICIES CREATE HEALTHY WORKSITES

JULY 2017

About the 2015-2016 Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative Pledge the Practice Pass the Policy Campaign

The Bay Area Nutrition & Physical Activity Collaborative (BANPAC) Pledge the Practice! Pass the Policy! (PPPP!) campaign mobilizes organizations to pass and implement wellness and healthy beverage policies. In 2015 and 2016, the BANPAC PPPP! supported 50 worksites to adopt healthy beverage, food and physical activity policies to create Bay Area worksites that promote employee health and wellness.

Evaluation Methods

BANPAC engaged Ad Lucem Consulting to evaluate the BANPAC PPPP! campaign, taking an in-depth look at 21 of the participating organizations to explore:

- adoption and implementation of wellness policies;
- impact of policies on the beverage environment; and
- employee knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and behaviors related to healthy beverages, food and physical activity.

Figure 1 describes the four-method evaluation design, which provides a multifaceted description of the impact of the BANPAC PPPP! campaign within these 21 organizations.

Figure 1: BANPAC PPPP! Evaluation Methods

Evaluation Method	Purpose	Data Collection Timeline
Pre-Post Observational Assessment	Tracked changes in the beverage, food, and physical activity practices, policies and environment.	Collected at pre (after signature of a Memorandum of Understanding but before policy work began) and post (after the policy was in place 3+ months).
Pre-Post Beverage Assessment	Inventoried beverages served and sold to employees.	Collected at the same time as the Observational Assessment.
Online Organization Lead Survey	Examined policy development and implementation process at each organization.	3+ months after policy implementation.
Online Employee Survey	Assessed employees' awareness of new policies, intent and rationale behind policies, and knowledge and behavioral changes resulting from new policies implemented.	3+ months after policy implementation.

Participating Organizations

The 21 organizations participating in the in-depth evaluation were a mix of non-profit, for-profit and government agencies, with staff size ranging from 4 to 300 employees; organization types included healthcare, education, business, transportation, and social services. Participating organizations were located in Alameda, Marin, Napa and San Francisco Counties in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Recruitment for the BANPAC PPPP! campaign began in July 2015 and the last organizational policy was passed in December 2016. Evaluation data collection continued through April 2017.

BANPAC PPPP! Campaign Policy Requirements and Process

The BANPAC PPPP! campaign, conceived by the BANPAC Leadership Council, was funded by the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit Program. The Santa Clara County Public Health Department Center for Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention served as the project lead and managed all aspects of the project.

Participating BANPAC PPPP! organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding with BANPAC, agreeing to the following minimum policy requirements:

- **Adopt a Healthy Beverage Policy:** Serve/sell only beverages adhering to BANPAC's 100% Healthy Beverage Standards. The beverage standards apply 24 hours a day, year-round to beverages available to employees in vending machines, worksite food locations, and during meetings, events, programming, and fundraising sales.
- **Adopt a Physical Activity Policy:** Implement 3 physical activity promoting strategies from the BANPAC physical activity standards to provide all employees with opportunities for physical activity during the workday.
- **Optional Policies:** Organizations were encouraged to adopt one or more of the following optional policies:
 - Assure that 50% of available food options are healthy wherever food is served or sold
 - Expand the 100% healthy beverage policy to beverages served/sold to customers, participants and clients
 - Require funded partners to follow the 100% healthy beverage policy

100% Healthy Beverage Policy Standards

- Access to free, safe drinking water
- All beverages served or sold can only include:
 - Water – no additives
 - Unflavored/unsweetened
 - low-fat milk
 - dairy alternatives
 - coffee/tea
 - Fruit/vegetable-based and unsweetened juice drinks and 100% juice (max 160 calories)
 - Diet beverages (no calories)

Physical Activity Policy Strategies

- 10-minutes per day:
 - Instant Recess
 - Walking meeting
 - Stretch break
- Post signage to promote stairs
- Organize walking challenges/groups
- Provide stretching/resistance exercises
- Schedule physical activity breaks for meetings 2+ hours
- Promote opportunities for physical activity:
 - within/near the worksite
 - at community meetings/events
- Expand opportunities for active transportation
- Encourage use of employer benefits that support physical activity

McClure Nelson & Associates were the project technical assistance providers, responsible for recruiting organizations, shepherding them through the policy adoption process and collecting evaluation data. Technical assistance ranged from health education materials, to presentations to generate staff and leadership buy-in for wellness policies, to resources highlighting alternatives to sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs), such as recipes for fruit-infused ‘spa water’. Each organization that passed the required policies also received resources to support implementation including water pitchers, reusable water bottles, dumbbell weights, yoga mats and balance balls.

Understanding the Impact of Worksite Wellness Policies

Worksite wellness policies that limit the types of beverages sold and increase opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating during the workday contribute to overall health. The BANPAC PPPP! campaign evaluation findings presented below capture progress on implementing wellness policies, policy impact on changing work environments, staff perceptions of policy impact, and staff beverage, food and physical activity behaviors.

Progress Implementing Policies

One staff person, primarily a manager or human resource staff member, from each organization completed the Organization Lead survey. These staff served as the organization lead for their organization, spearheading the process of adopting and implementing wellness policies.

Organizations made progress toward implementing a combination of healthy beverage, physical activity and healthy food policies (Figure 2). Ninety percent of organization leads reported fully implementing a beverage policy, while 57% reported fully implementing a physical activity policy. Although healthy food policies were optional, 17 organizations (81%) reported they were either fully implementing or were in the process of implementing elements of a food policy.

Figure 2: Policy Implementation Status (n=21)

Policy Type	Implementation Status		
	Full	In Progress	N/A
Healthy Beverage	19	2	0
Physical Activity	12	9	0
Healthy Food at Meetings	10	7	4
Healthy Food for Programs/Services	9	4	7
Healthy Food at Events	11	4	4
Healthy Food in Vending	3	0	18
Healthy Food in Café/Cafeteria/ Snack Shack	2	4	15

All 21 organizations relied on a combination of BANPAC technical assistance and their own internal capacities to pass wellness policies. The most common strategies employed to achieve adoption of wellness policies included: disseminating educational materials and making presentations to staff; obtaining formal leadership buy-in (e.g. through endorsed events and communications supporting final policies); sharing draft wellness policy standards with staff for input; and enhancing staff awareness of physical activity resources.

Key elements identified by organization leads that facilitated the implementation of wellness policies included: staff support for healthy eating/active living (86%), strong leadership support for wellness policies (52%), and incentives and promotional items to engage staff (38%) in healthy eating and physical activity. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the organization leads surveyed indicated that they had

the key supports needed to pass the policy, but would have benefited from additional educational materials/presentations on: incorporating healthy food and beverages into the diet (52%) and the purpose and benefits of worksite wellness policies (33%).

The primary challenges faced during implementation of wellness policies included: competing priorities within the organization (48%), lack of interest in the policy among staff (33%), and limited space and/or resources to promote physical activity (33%). Organization leads addressed these challenges by providing education on healthy beverages, foods and physical activity (52%) and by identifying staff preferences for the types of healthy beverages, foods and activities desired in the workplace (29%). A key challenge noted by almost half of the organization leads is the need for funding to sustain implementation of wellness policies (48%).

“It’s been a fun and collaborative process of unlearning our unhealthy go-tos and finding healthy alternatives...Our store runs have turned into more of a journey, with a team of folks trying to find neighborhood grocers who provide fresh fruit, vegetables and healthy snacks.”

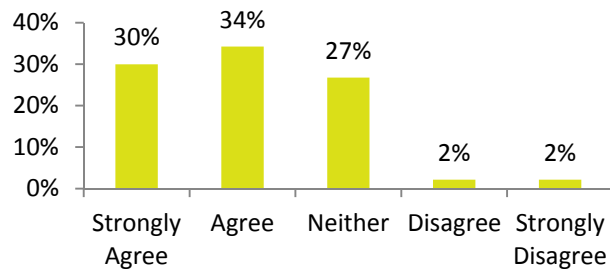
Overall, the organization leads indicated that the wellness policies have positively impacted organizational leadership and employees, encouraging healthier eating and more physical activity within and outside of the workplace.

Staff Response to Wellness Policies

A total of 187 staff completed the employee survey; the number of staff per organization completing surveys ranged from 3 to 24. Staff represented a variety of employee types within their organization and their length of employment ranged from new hires to 37 years.

Staff survey results indicate that new wellness policies increased opportunities to make healthy choices at work.

Figure 3: Ease of drinking healthy beverages at work post-policy (n=178)



Sixty-four percent of staff (n=178) indicated that the healthy beverage policy made it easier to drink healthy beverages at work (Figure 3). Fifty-one percent (51%) noted increased access to free water and 39% noted increased access to healthier bottled beverages. Changes to the beverage environment had an influence on staff beyond their choices at work; over half (58%) of staff surveyed indicated that the healthy beverage policy made it easier for them to achieve their overall health goals.

Physical activity policies also had a positive impact on staff wellness, with 46% (n=165) reporting that they were more active at work after wellness policies were adopted. As a result of the physical activity policy, over half (51%) of staff survey respondents indicated that their workplace provided time to be active during the workday.

Worksite Physical Activity Opportunities (n=187)

- Stretch breaks (44%)
- Walking groups (43%)
- Walking meetings (35%)
- Active transportation to work (33%)
- Fitness challenges, staff exercise classes and discounted gym memberships (32%)

Seventeen organizations (81%) chose to implement elements of a healthy food policy to further improve employee health. Over half (58%) of staff surveyed said that more fruits and vegetables were available at work as a result of the food policy; almost two thirds (65%) reported eating a healthier diet as a result of the increased worksite availability of healthy food and emphasis placed on good nutrition and health. Staff also indicated that food served at meetings (72%) was healthier than before policy implementation.

A small percentage of staff across the participating organizations (10-13% depending on the policy type) had never heard of their organization’s wellness policy prior to receiving the survey, indicating that more comprehensive outreach or advertising for wellness policies could be helpful to ensuring all staff comply and participate.

Policy Impact on Worksite Environments

The technical assistance provider, McClure Nelson and Associates, visited each organization to collect data for the observational environmental and beverage assessments. The environmental assessment explored nine wellness topics, ranging from healthy vending to physical activity promotion.¹

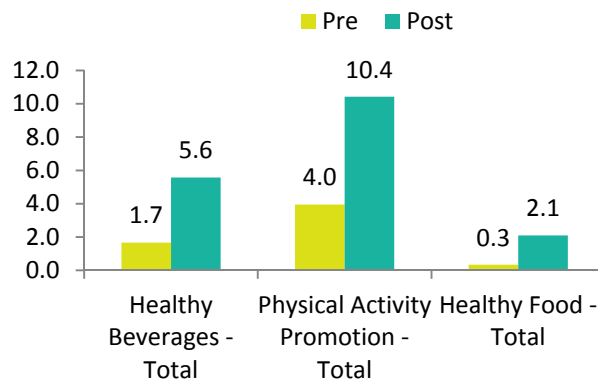
Observational assessment wellness topics received a score based on the presence or absence of practices, systems and environmental structures to support wellness, including whether a written policy was in place as well as observations of specific features of the physical environment, such as space for physical activity. The maximum total score across the nine wellness topics was 60.

The environmental assessment was completed before and after policy implementation and results illustrate a positive shift toward healthy workplace environments. The average total score before policy implementation was 12.5 points (ranging from 4 to 21 across all organizations). At post, the average score across organizations almost tripled to 35 points (ranging from 25 to 56 points across all organizations). Every organization increased their score, with the majority (90%) of the 21 organizations increasing their overall score by at least 150%.

Topic-specific scores showed positive changes for healthy beverages and physical activity promotion – policies required by the BANPAC PPPP! campaign. At post, the average score

- Environmental Assessment Topics**
- Administrative and Organizational Supports
 - Health Promotion Activities
 - Healthy Beverages - Overall
 - Healthy Beverage Vending
 - Healthy Beverages - Meetings, Events
 - Healthy Food - Overall
 - Healthy Food - Meetings, Events
 - Healthy Food Vending
 - Physical Activity Promotion

Figure 4: Average Pre/Post Score by Policy Type



¹ The complete assessment includes two additional categories for observation: breastfeeding supports and tobacco-free worksites. These data were excluded from this analysis, as they do not directly relate to the healthy beverage, physical activity and healthy food policies being evaluated.

for healthy beverages more than tripled and the average score for physical activity promotion more than doubled, as compared to pre (Figure 4). Even the healthy food topic, which was optional for the BANPAC PPPPI!, showed positive change from pre to post.

Wellness Policy Impact on the Beverage Environment Findings

The beverage environment assessment examined the beverage types available at participating organizations, including at staff meetings and events, in the cafeteria, in vending machines, and at other organization-specific places. The types of beverages assessed fell into three overarching categories²: sugar-sweetened beverages, diet beverages, and healthy beverages.

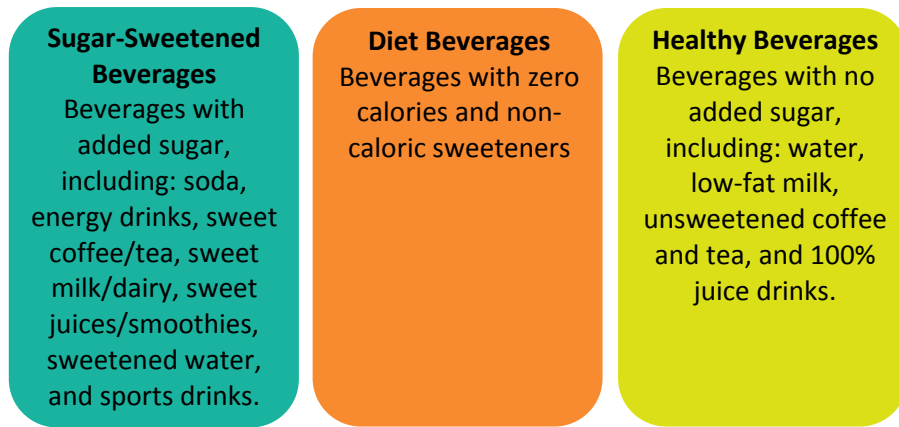


Figure 5: Availability of Beverage Types at Pre/Post

Plain water with no additives and unsweetened coffee and tea were the most frequently available beverages before and after policy implementation. Sales and availability of SSBs and diet beverages declined after implementation, while the number of organizations providing at least one healthy beverage stayed the same (Figure 5).

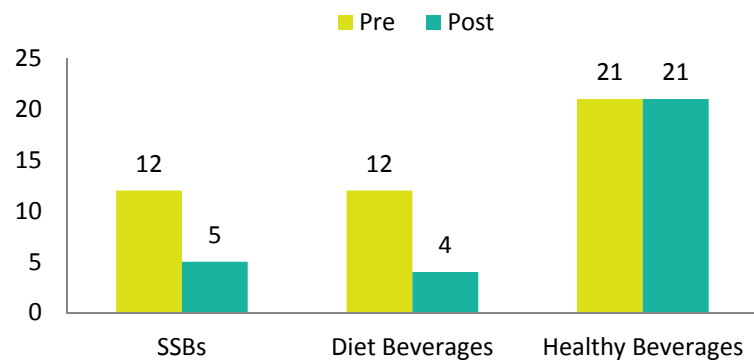


Figure 6 shows the change from pre to post across all beverages in the observational assessment:

- Of the 9 organizations that sold or served sugar-sweetened sodas prior to policy implementation, 7 eliminated soda post policy.
- Of the 5 organizations that served sweetened, 2% or whole milk prior to policy implementation, 4 eliminated milks not adhering to the policy.

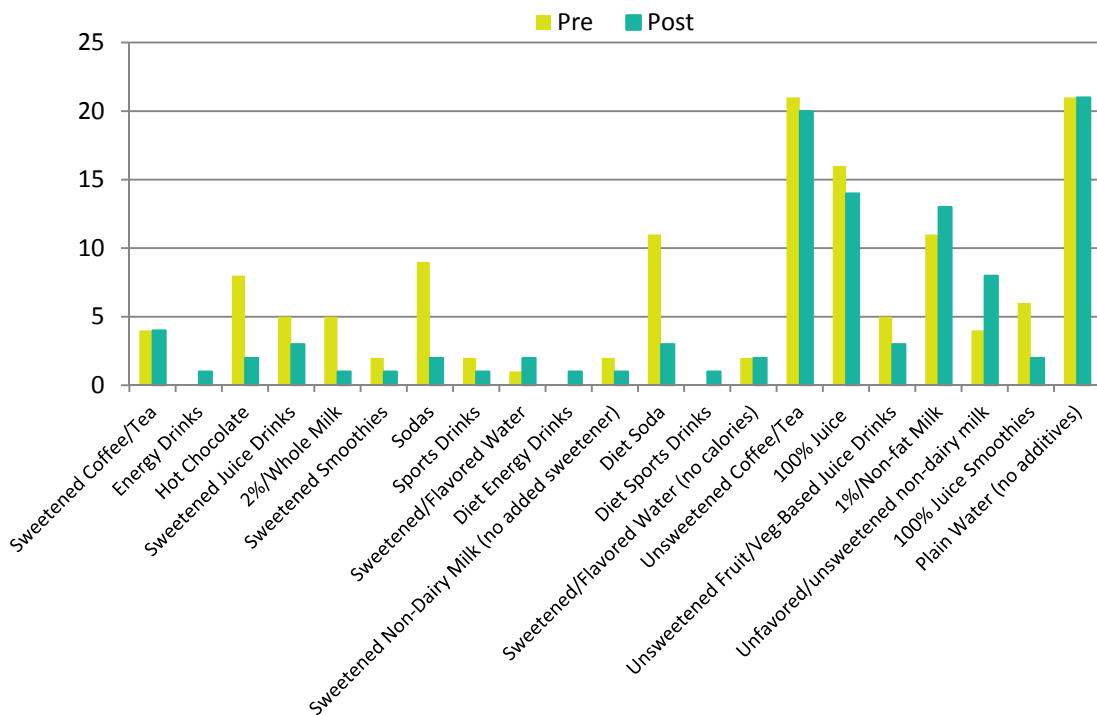
² While beer and wine were observed at one organization, they were excluded from analysis, as alcoholic beverages were not specifically identified in the BANPAC beverage policy standards.

- Of the 11 organizations serving diet soda before the wellness policy, 8 eliminated diet soda after policy implementation.
- Of the 8 organizations providing sweetened hot chocolate, 6 eliminated hot chocolate after the policy.

Despite overall improvements to the beverage environment, a few organizations introduced sugar-sweetened beverages after policy implementation:

- One organization made sweetened/flavored water available after policy implementation (for a total of 2 organizations at post).
- One organization made energy drinks available after policy implementation.

Figure 6: Pre/Post Comparison of All Beverages Observed



Conclusion

The evaluation of the BANPAC PPPP! campaign found that implementation of comprehensive healthy beverage, food and physical activity policies at Bay Area worksites resulted in positive changes that improved the healthfulness of worksites and improved staff eating and physical activity behavior. The multi-method evaluation approach produced a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the BANPAC PPPP! campaign. It captured change at many levels—including organizational environments and policies, as well as perceptions and behaviors of staff at participating organizations.

A number of recommendations emerged from these findings to provide guidance to organizations working to create a healthy worksite:

- **Maintain engaged and committed staff:** A key element to successful policy implementation is buy-in among those impacted by the policy. Staff engagement was identified as a top factor facilitating policy implementation. Effective engagement activities included: providing staff the opportunity for input on the policy implementation process and identifying and prioritizing staff needs.
- **Work with leadership to elevate policies and model behavior:** Ensuring organizational leadership supports and upholds policies promotes staff support and adherence. Organization leads noted that formalizing leadership buy-in through endorsements was one of the top supports for implementation. One organization lead noted, “Staff appreciate working for an employer who cares about their overall health”.
- **Implement comprehensive wellness policies:** Implementation of healthy beverage, food and physical activity policies creates a holistically healthier work environment for staff. Organization leads described how various policy elements contributed to employee health as well as a workplace culture shift toward health. Emphasizing multiple aspects of health lifts the importance of overall employee wellness. In addition, ongoing technical assistance can support organizations to fully implement their wellness policies and understand healthy versus unhealthy beverages.
- **Consider ways to sustain the policy from the start:** Organizations need resources in order to support staff wellness moving forward, and indicated that supports such as educational resources and incentives (e.g. water bottles, water filters and physical activity resources) helped support policy implementation. Organizations can find free educational resources to help sustain wellness policies on the BANPAC website (www.banpac.org), government websites (such as the Centers for Disease Control or state/local health departments) and nutrition organizations such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest. In addition, organizations can create a small budget line item for wellness activities or approach their health plans for wellness incentive items for employees.
- **Market wellness policies continuously:** Organizations should ensure that recent hires and long-term staff understand the wellness policies and support implementation. Brief updates at staff meetings and posted wellness policy guidelines remind staff of the policies, generate conversation about health and wellness, and continue to emphasize staff health as an organizational priority.

“One staff member had been struggling with weight loss for years...She recently lost over 60 pounds...She talked about how having a healthy environment and working in an organization that supports wellness made it possible.”

To learn more about the BANPAC PPPP! campaign and for resources on healthy beverage, physical activity and food policies, visit www.banpac.org.

