

# Interim Evaluation Report to the PWTF Advisory Board

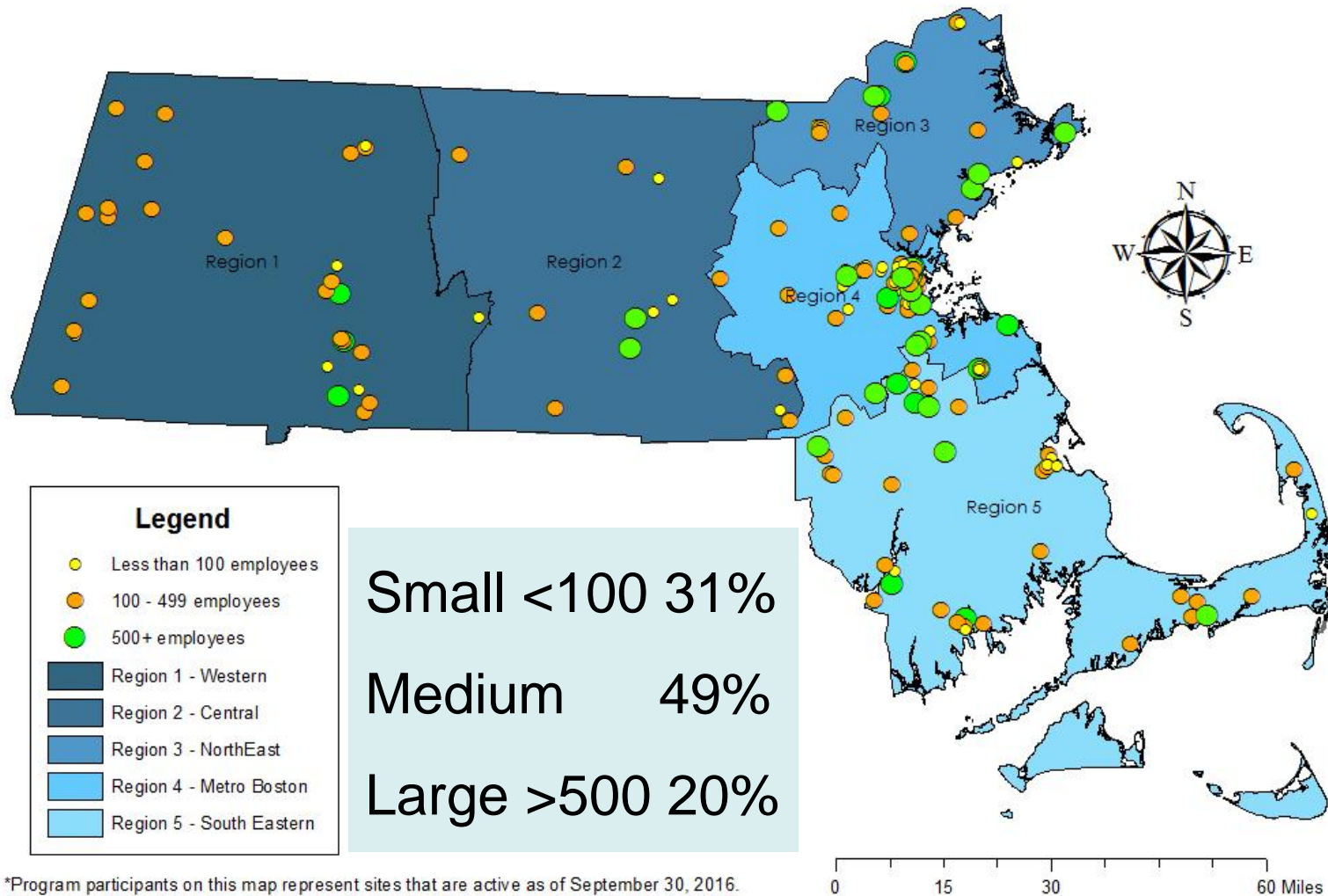
## PWTF Worksite Wellness Data Management and Evaluation



Laura Punnett<sup>1</sup>, ScD; Wen-Chieh Lin<sup>2</sup>, PhD; Kevin Kane<sup>2</sup>, MS; Suzanne Nobrega<sup>1</sup>, MS;  
Laura Sefton<sup>2</sup>, MPP; Wenjun Li<sup>2</sup>, PhD; Robin Toof<sup>1</sup>, EdD; Melissa Wall<sup>1</sup>, MA

<sup>1</sup>University of MA Lowell, <sup>2</sup>University of MA Medical School

## Massachusetts Working on Wellness Program Participants by Organization Size, Cohorts 1-4

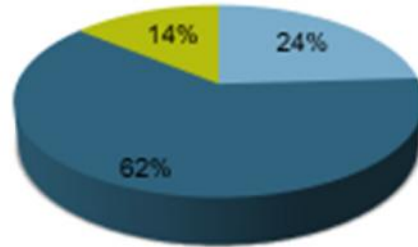


# Working on Wellness Program Reach

**167**  
Employers  
Enrolled

Nearly  
**74,000**  
Employees

**21%**  
Lower Wage  
Workers



## Organizational Characteristics: WoW Cohorts 1 - 4

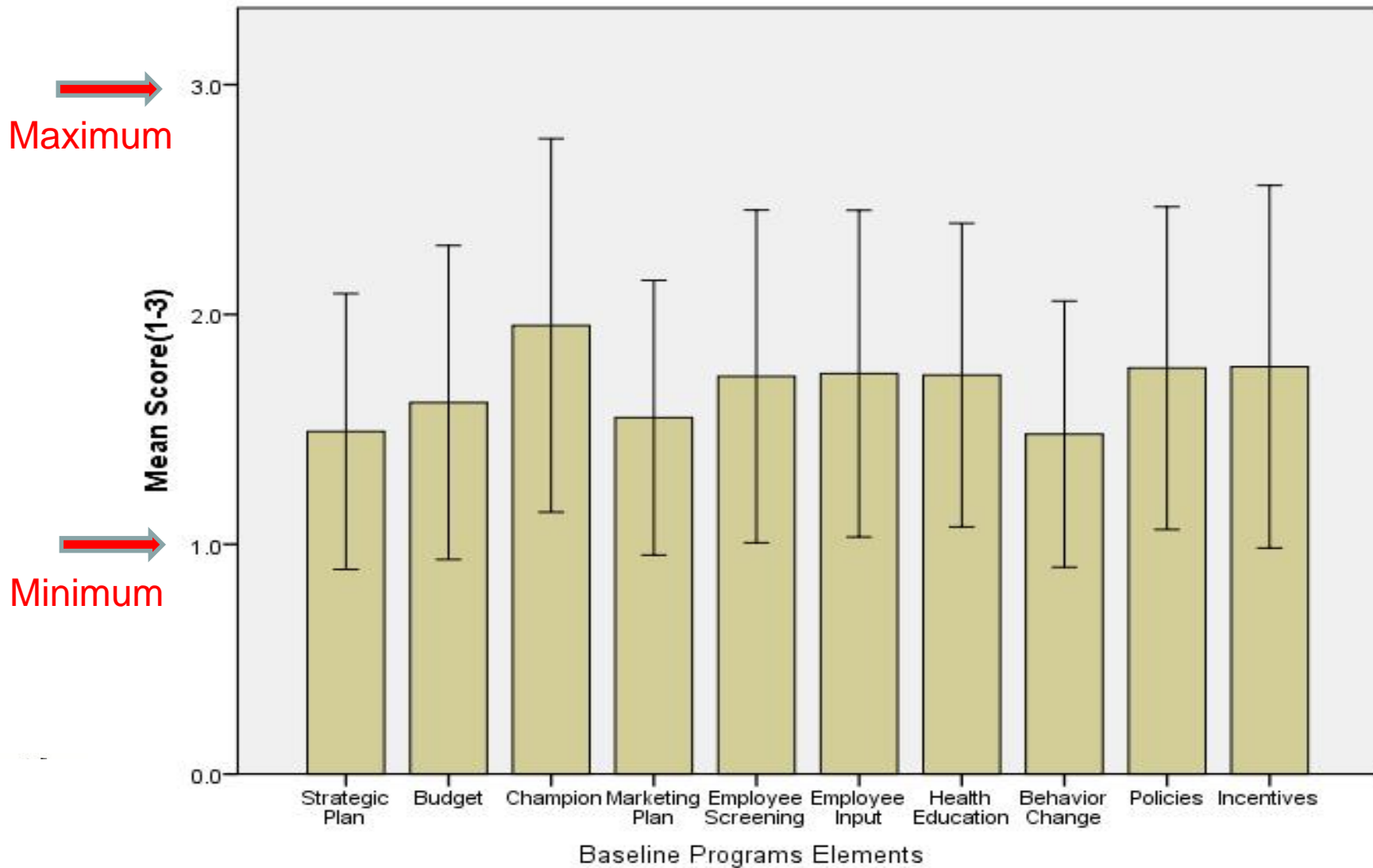
Industry	
Health care (17%)	Public admin. (6%)
Other services (26%)	Professional services (6%)
Education (13%)	Construction (3%)
Manufacturing (4%)	Finance and insurance (3%)

(Other sectors and unclassified: 16%)

## Workforce Characteristics: WoW Cohorts 1 - 4

Age: >45 years	46%
Gender: female	63%
Race/ethnicity	White 61%, Black 15%, Hispanic 12%, Other 12%
Education < = HS	26%
Unionized: some or all	38%
Shift work: % on first shift	84.5%
Hourly	60%
Low wage workers: % of employers	34% have 0% low wage 24% have > 25% low wage

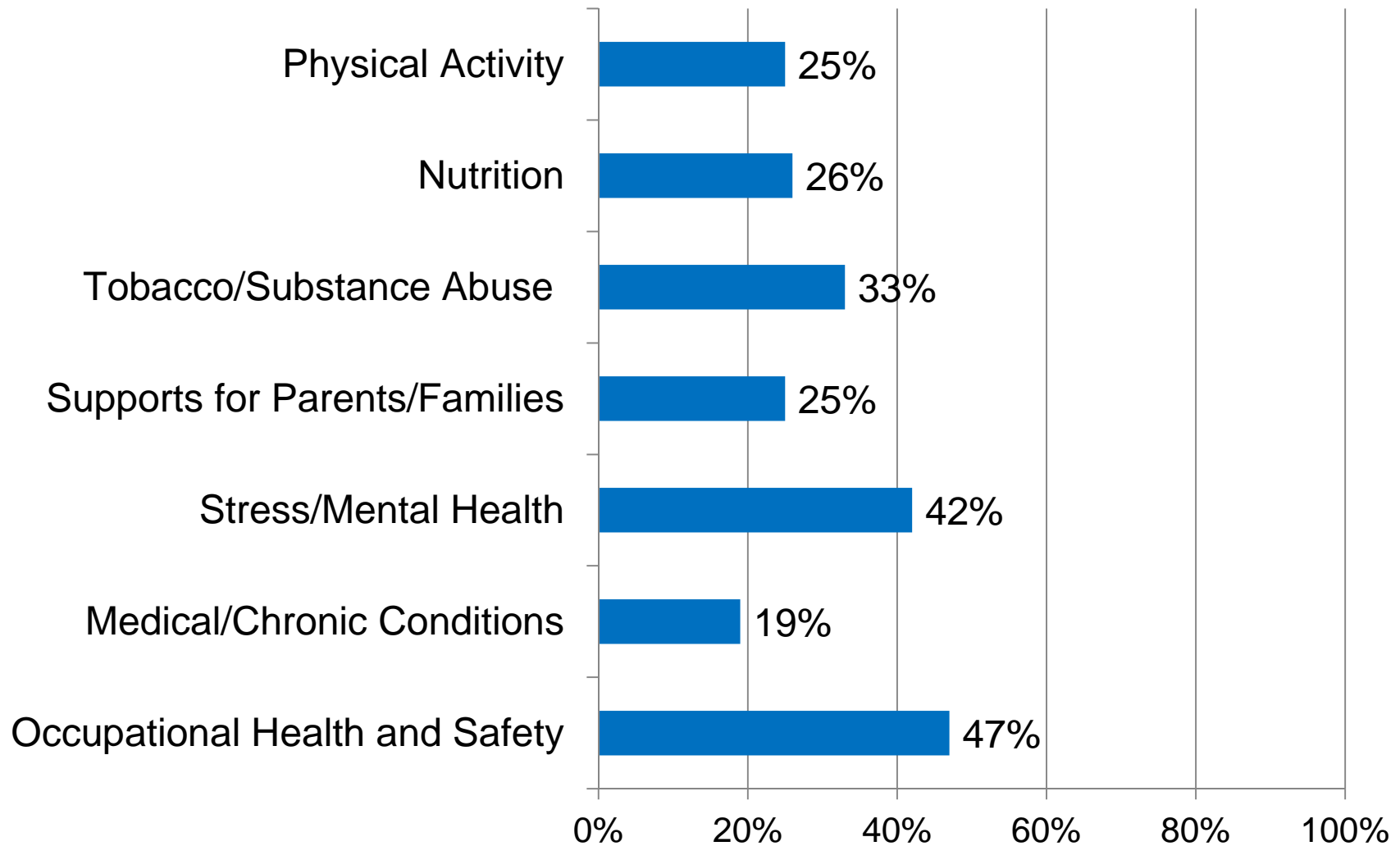
## Baseline Program Elements: WoW Cohorts 1 - 4



---

## Employer's workplace health, safety and wellbeing policies & facilities: Percent of total points (C1-3)

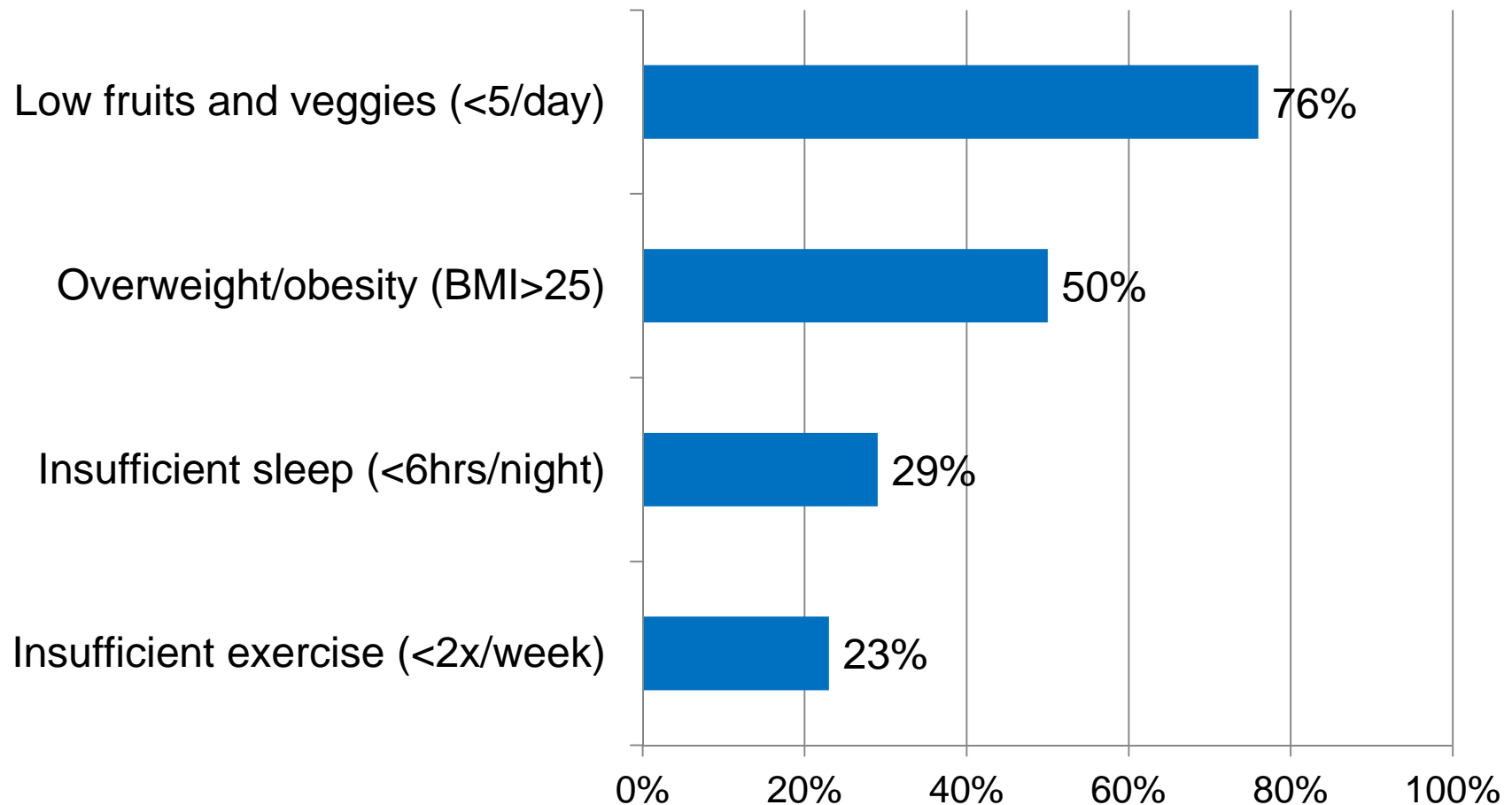
---



---

## Top health risk factors of individual employees (C 1-3)

---

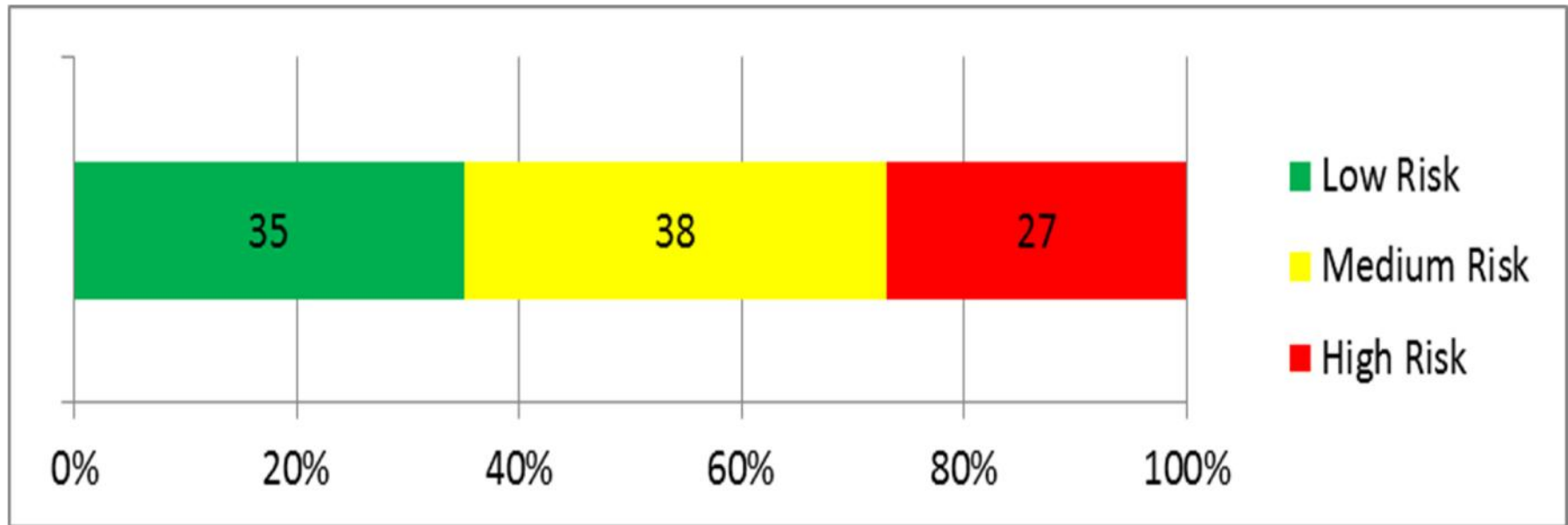




---

## Distribution of health scores of individual employees

---



*Score = sum of 9 risk factors*

---

---

Table 5. Alignment of activities with employee needs and interests

	Activities "I am likely to participate in...."	Policies and environmental supports "I am very interested in...."	"I am ready to make changes"	Employers' selected program targets
Healthy eating	45%	58%	37%	74%
Exercise	63%	68%	38%	94%
Stress reduction	57%	61%	46%	68%
Workplace ergonomics	32%	-----	-----	16%

# Most frequent employer activities

Physical Activity		Nutrition		Stress Reduction	
<i>Freq</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Intervention</i>
25	On-site yoga/general fitness classes	21	Workshop on nutrition and healthy eating	20	Yoga classes
21	Walking Club	15	Meeting food policy	13	Stress management and coping skills trainings, demos, and/or practice
19	Personal health coaching, fitness education, seminars	12	Healthier options in vending machines	11	Meditation/mindfulness classes

# Quality of WoW curriculum and technical support

<u>Quality Indicator</u>	<u>% Agree/Strongly Agree</u>
Online curriculum	95%
Instructions for accessing clear	83%
Instructions for completing clear	83%
Tools were useful	100%
Program expectations met	95%
	<u>% rated Good/Excellent</u>
Overall value	100%
Expert Series	100%
Opportunities for learning	95%
Online discussion portal	37%
	<u>% endorsing</u>
Used the online discussion forum	60%
Technical assistance calls rated as useful	67%

# Program support and employee involvement

<u>Wellness Sponsor:</u>	% Agree/Strongly Agree
Communicated regularly about health, safety, and wellbeing	94%
Participated in wellness activities	89%
Could be seen practicing/modeling positive health behaviors	100%
Encouraged employee participation	89%
Met with the Champion and/or wellness committee to review progress of the wellness initiative	89%
<u>Employee Involvement</u>	% of Champions Reporting
Employees are participating	94%
Wellness committee members actively engaged	80%
Non-wellness committee members taking action to initiate wellness policies and programs	66%

---

**Legislative goal (i):** the extent to which the program impacted the prevalence of preventable health conditions

---

- Prevalence of chronic conditions can be reduced by engaging healthy behaviors and lifestyles
  - Employers' (increased) policy and environmental supports, and new programs; employees' readiness for change
- Of 74,000 WoW participating employees, up to
  - 12,485 could increase daily intake of fresh produce
  - 4,800 could engage in exercise, and
  - 2,868 could feel less stress at work
- Healthy behaviors are likely to be sustained by WoW

---

**Legislative goal (ii):** the extent to which the program reduced health care costs or the growth in health care cost trends

---

- Financial savings can be achieved in two ways
  - Cost reduction: Improving health of unhealthy employees
    - \$0.3 to \$1.9 million for eating healthily
    - \$0.1 to \$0.7 million for sufficient exercise
    - \$0.3 to \$1.0 million for exercising to lower body weight
    - \$0.1 to \$0.4 million for lowering stress
  - Cost avoidance: helping healthy employees stay healthy
    - Limited evidence on program effectiveness
    - Omitting these benefits may under-estimate the complete benefits of WoW

**Legislative goal (iii):** whether health care costs were reduced and who (populations, not payers) benefited

*WoW addresses prevention of chronic conditions; reduction in healthcare costs can be anticipated over a longer period of time.*

	Expected success	Annual savings
Fresh produce	5%	\$ 312,132
	30%	\$1,872,792
Sufficient exercise	5%	\$ 119,991
	30%	\$ 719,946
Exercise => body weight	5%	\$ 260,850
	30%	\$1,043,400
Stress reduction	5%	\$ 71,706
	30%	\$ 430,236



---

---

**Legislative goal (iv):** the extent to which workplace based wellness programs were expanded and whether programs improved employee health, productivity and recidivism

---

- Participation
  - 50 organizations (first two cohorts) participated to plan and implement comprehensive WoW-programs
  - Up to 155 more employers are planning to do the same
  - Over 74,000 employees may potentially benefit
- Achievement
  - Infrastructure developed and programs established
  - 84% of programs are likely to continue
  - 45% of employers would allocate resources to support their wellness initiative

---

---

**Legislative goal (vii):** Recommendations for whether the funding mechanism should be extended or whether an alternative funding mechanism should be established

---

- The funding mechanism should be extended to accomplish the following:
  - Leverage the established infrastructure and baseline data for a comprehensive evaluation and for extending the work to future cohorts
  - Continue in-depth analysis for estimating the program impact and providing legislators with evidence-based findings
  - Strengthen community partnerships to maximize benefits for both employers and communities
  - Utilize the All Payers Claims Database for comprehensive analysis of changes in health care utilization and expenditures resulting from WoW

---

# Study Strengths

---

- A strong, interactive, government-community-academic partnership
- A thoughtful, evidence-based, rigorous program providing strong support for employers
- Robust survey instruments, data collection design, and statistical analysis
- Study design readily adoptable for future cohorts
- Actionable information for employers regarding wellness-related needs and interests of their employees

---

# Study Limitations

---

- Voluntary participation without random assignment
- Employer/organizational level analysis; no evaluation of program effects on individual employees
- Organizations' multi-component programs desirable, but hinder ability to partition component effectiveness
- Limited to plausible range of benefits
- Infeasible to assess long-term effects in first year
- Employee turnover may interfere with ability to conduct long-term follow-up of health benefits
- APCD data for the post-WoW period not yet available for analysis

---

## Summary of Findings

---

- WoW reaches many employers without previous wellness programs.
- Small and medium-sized employers are 80% of the participating organizations.
- Employees include low-wage, racial/ethnic minority, and non-college-educated persons; many have moderate to high health risk scores.
- Most employers have implemented changes in organizational policy and the work environment to support healthier behaviors by their employees.
- Substantial future health benefits can be expected from these WoW program activities.

---

---

# Acknowledgements

---

“Working on Wellness” is a program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, developed and managed in partnership with Health Resources in Action and Advancing Wellness.

Funding provided by the Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund, as established by Chapter 224 of the Acts of 2012.

*Corresponding author:* Laura Punnett, [Laura\\_Punnett@uml.edu](mailto:Laura_Punnett@uml.edu)  
or 978-934-3269

---

---