The NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Office of Preventive Health and WorkCover NSW are working together to develop and implement the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative.

The Initiative aims to improve the health of working adults and decrease their risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease by focussing on healthy weight, physical activity, healthy eating, smoking and harmful alcohol consumption. The Initiative will be rolled out across NSW using a staged approach according to industry type. Industries with a high proportion of workers at high risk of chronic diseases will be prioritised first. The Healthy Workers Initiative is comprised of the Workplace Support Service which includes a brief Health Check and will be supported by a Workplace Engagement and Communication Strategy.

The Initiative is funded by the Australian Government under the National Partnership Agreement for Preventive Health. Pilot 1 of the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative is currently underway. Pilot 1 will test and refine the process of delivering a service that aims to create a culture of health in the workplace and improve the health of workers in NSW.

Pilot 1
Piloting of the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative began in September 2013 and will continue until mid-December 2013. Two service providers are on board to deliver the Workplace Support Service which includes a Brief Health Check for workers. There are four manufacturing and two transport businesses actively taking part in the piloting of the Initiative in Western Sydney and Central Coast Local Health Districts at this point in time.

Health practitioners from Murrumbidgee Medicare Local have been trained and are now recruiting businesses from across that region.

The Healthy Workers Initiative team will refine the service delivery models, tools and materials based on evaluation findings after this round of piloting and in preparation for Pilot 2 in 2014.

Evaluation of Pilot 1
Evaluation of Pilot 1 of the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative is focused on participation and implementation of the Initiative in workplaces. This includes assessment of the feasibility of different delivery models for different types of worksites (single site businesses, multi site businesses and business parks) and different types of industries (manufacturing, road freight transport and housing construction).
The objectives of Pilot 1 evaluation are to:

- Assess participation of the different types of workplace settings in the Initiative.
- Identify enablers and barriers to engagement, recruitment and ongoing participation in the three pilot locations.
- Assess the use of current tools, materials and resources and identify the need to modify or adapt them for different workplace setting types (excluding the AUSDRISK and tobacco dependency scales of the Brief Health Check).
- Assess the process of engagement of workers through champions.

The evaluation is being conducted through a case study approach using an ethnographic study design and a series of interviews with service providers and businesses.

**Stakeholder Engagement, Marketing and Communications**

Development of the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative brand has commenced. NSW Healthy Workers Initiative branding will create an identity and ‘look and feel’ for the Initiative to facilitate workplace engagement and communications.

Planning is underway for Stakeholder Engagement, Marketing and Communications activities for the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative. The Initiative will trial industry specific and geographic focussed approaches to business engagement and communications with a strong focus on partnerships.

**NSW Healthy Workers Initiative 2014**

Two phases of piloting of the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative are planned for the first half of 2014: Pilot 2 and 3. Pilot 2 will validate the approach to marketing and delivery of the Initiative, and trial the systems and processes for delivery. Pilot 3 will trial events based activity, which will be used to locally engage businesses with the initiative.

An Executive Advisory Group is being established to provide high-level advice on the implementation of the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative. The Advisory Group will be chaired by Dr Kerry Chant (Deputy-Director General and NSW Chief Health Officer) and Mr John Watson (General Manager, WorkCover Authority of NSW). Membership will include representatives from Unions NSW, Australian Industry Group, the NSW Business Chamber and General Practice NSW. The inaugural meeting of the Executive Advisory Group is due to be held at the NSW Ministry of Health shortly.

---

For more information about the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative:
Email: healthyworkers@doh.health.nsw.gov.au