

## SUSTAIN

## make road safety part of the organization's wellness program

**MEDICAL CONDITIONS, MEDICATIONS AND DRIVING**

Wellness programs can provide information about medical conditions and medications that may affect a person's ability to operate a vehicle safely. Workers aged 55 and older are expected to make up more than a quarter of the U.S. workforce by 2020.<sup>2</sup> As the workforce ages, the issue of medications and driving becomes more relevant. According to AAA, two-thirds of drivers age 65 and older take five or more daily medications that can affect their ability to drive safely.<sup>3</sup> But medications and driving isn't just an issue for seniors:

- **Antihistamines and other over-the-counter and prescription allergy medications may cause drowsiness, slow reaction time and impair coordination.**
- **Common prescription drugs (including medications for depression, high blood pressure, pain, diabetes, cholesterol, ulcers, anxiety disorders and insomnia) can cause drowsiness or affect vision and other skills needed to be a focused driver.**
- **Over-the-counter drugs such as cold and cough medicines, drugs to prevent nausea or motion sickness, pain relievers, decongestants and diuretics can cause drowsiness or dizziness.**

Approximately 75% of the U.S. workforce has access to an employer wellness program. Wellness programs are offered by half of all employers with 50 or more employees with the majority using financial incentives to encourage participation.<sup>1</sup> If your organization has a wellness program, connecting **road safety** to health and well-being will increase opportunities to engage employees and sustain road safety communication.

**SEAT BELT USE AND DISTRACTED DRIVING**

Encouraging seat belt use and discouraging mobile device use while driving both provide ongoing education and outreach opportunities.

*"At Acushnet Company, each employee is required to watch a monthly wellness video, 15-22 minutes long. The videos are produced in-house and include several 1-2 minute infomercials that include seat belts or distracted driving. We also communicate through our wellness program that a person's overall health affects safe driving. For example, poor health can be a leading contributor to fatigue, impaired vision and alertness."*

Terry King, Sr. Safety Manager Corporate Safety, Acushnet Company and NETS member

Additionally, signed pledge cards committing to seat belt use could be bundled with other requirements such as Health Risk Assessments, being tobacco-free, participation in healthy-weight counseling, etc., that may already be in place as a condition for receiving an insurance premium discount.

**EXERCISES CONNECTED WITH DRIVING**

A comprehensive wellness program can encourage employees to do simple exercises that improve flexibility and range of motion. According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, flexibility helps with the following activities related to safe driving:

- ✓ Braking
- ✓ Getting in and out of the car
- ✓ Looking to the side and rear
- ✓ Steering
- ✓ Parking the car
- ✓ Sitting for long periods of time

*"At Johnson & Johnson, we are committed to employee health and providing employees every opportunity to manage their personal energy effectively, so they*

*can be at peak performance at work, on the road and at home. Our Energy for Performance in Life courses focused on personal energy management are offered to all employees either in person or through e-Course. In 2012, one of our U.S. companies provided the live course to all employees in the field or on-site. Self-reported data showed decline in multi-tasking, increase in better eating behavior, increase in energy and increase in absorption in work. We believe these factors are important for drivers to perform at their best throughout the day, including their time behind the wheel."*

Fik Isaac VP Global Health Services, Johnson & Johnson  
(a NETS' Board of Directors member company)

<sup>1</sup>RAND health, Workplace Wellness Programs Study, sponsored by U.S. DOH, 2013

<sup>2</sup>CDC, Occupational Highway Transportation Deaths Among Workers Aged ≥55 Years — United States, 2003–2010

<sup>3</sup>AAA seniordriving.com