

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 1, 2016

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Health Department offering free vending assessments for employers

Lawrence, Kan. — The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department is offering free vending assessments to employers in Douglas County in partnership with WorkWell Lawrence, a group of community members working to improve health in the workplace.

Staff and University of Kansas students who are enrolled in an evaluation and assessment class in the Department of Health, Sport and Exercise Sciences will examine foods and beverages in vending machines to determine the presence of healthy options. They also will look at labeling to see if it encourages employees and customers to make healthy choices. The employer will receive recommendations on how to increase nutritional options, guidance on how to get employee buy-in, and how to promote the availability of healthy food and beverages.

Community Health Director Chris Tilden said most individuals spend a majority of their time at work, so offering more nutritional snack options, such as nuts, fruit and baked chips, is important. “Healthy employees can mean fewer sick days and lower insurance costs. It also can lead to a motivated workforce.”

The vending assessments are part of the “FuelGood, Feel Good” initiative, a campaign launched in October to help residents identify healthy food and beverage options in public spaces.

According to a 2014 survey of 62 Douglas County employers, only 13 percent said they ensure 50 percent or more of the vending machine food and beverages represent healthy choices, and only 23 percent said the healthy options were identified by signs or symbols.

For more information, visit FuelGoodNow.com.