



**Worksite Wellness Council of Rhode Island
Worksite Tobacco Control Initiative Progress Report
May 2003
By Debra Foley, Tobacco Control Consultant**

The Worksite Tobacco Control Initiative's significant accomplishments for the grant year 2002-2003 include:

- The Worksite Tobacco Control Consultant had direct contact with over 74 employers in an effort to implement worksite tobacco control policies and programs.
- Ten employers implemented improved smoking policies representing over 4,700 employees, which have reduced or eliminated exposure to second hand smoke.
- Forty employers conducted some form of worksite smoking cessation activity resulting in 70 employees quitting smoking. This may account for annual savings of \$91,000 to their employers (based on WELCOA's estimate of a smoking employee costing an employer on average \$1,300 per year).
- Effective collaboration with the American Lung Association, the American Cancer Society, BCBSRI Good Health Benefit, United HealthCare of NE, Care New England, the RI Hospitality Association, Municipal Substance Abuse Task Forces, and the RI Department of Health Tobacco Control Program, to name a few, have provided opportunities to reach a greater number of worksites. Many thanks to all representatives of these organizations!
- Participation in the Channel 10 HealthFit Expo in September 2002 and the Greater Providence Chamber Business Expo in April 2003.
- The success of the Worksite Tobacco Control Initiative was partly responsible for the WWCRI being awarded a grant from the RI Department of Health to encourage worksites to implement "Programs to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity".

The Worksite Tobacco Control Initiative will complete its' fourth cycle of funding in June 2003 and has been funded for another year effective July 2003. Since the Initiative began in 2000, the Tobacco Control Consultant has directly contacted over 150 employers. Over 20 of these employers represent 15,800 employees who are now working for companies with improved tobacco control policies and programs. In addition, five companies are in the process of considering improvements to their smoking policies, which could impact an additional 5,400 employees. Fifty percent of the companies contacted conducted some form of worksite smoking cessation activity. Over 170 employees have quit smoking due in part to these employer sponsored smoking cessation programs, which may represent over \$221,000 in reduced annual costs to their employers (based on WELCOA's estimate).