

Why Total Worker Health expands occupational health into the arena of traditional public health

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Public Health professionals (broadly)

ABSTRACT: Occupational Safety and Health expanded into the purview of traditional Public Health in 2011. Given that adults typically spend much of their waking hours at work, factors such as work demands, job stress, supervisor behaviors as well as employee behaviors away from work become key determinants of health. Safe and healthy environments and behaviors are important to prevent accidents and improve well-being at work, at home, and within the community. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defined the concept of Total Worker Health in 2011 to emphasize an integrated approach that would jointly address workplace safety and health hazards along with employee well-being factors such as healthy lifestyles, thus bringing occupational health squarely into the community and the home. The Oregon Healthy Workforce Center (OHWC), a NIOSH Center of Excellence in Total Worker Health, has developed tools and toolkits geared toward enhancing workplace environments, improving safety at home, encouraging healthy lifestyles and emphasizing well-being in general. Occupational Health does not stop at the workplace doorstep any more, its purview is much broader and one that Public Health can learn from just as Occupational Health can learn from the principles and methods of traditional Public Health.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- Learn the definition of Total Worker Health
- Learn how occupational health now encompasses some of the traditional domain of public health

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