

## **Problem #1**

### **Obesity affects employee health and costs employers.**

Police officers are at an increased risk for becoming obese. "Obesity is a risk factor for many chronic diseases," explains Adam Long, PhD, director of Health Management Research, Gordian Health Solutions. "Members with chronic diseases account for 80+ percent of the health care cost for organizations, including direct medical and pharmacy expenses, most of which is paid by the employer. Members with chronic disease are also more prone to accidents, which means they cost employers more in worker's compensation and disability claims."

Employee obesity also affects employers indirectly through lost productivity due to absenteeism and lower productivity for those on-the-job (e.g., "presenteeism").

Nutrition and healthy lifestyle practices can promote optimal body fat and weight amongst police officers. The healthy eating program is designed to meet the needs of police officers and promote healthy lifestyle practices to promote weight loss and weight management.

## **Problem #2**

### **Heart Disease and cost to employers**

Police officers have a higher risk for heart disease than the general population. Police officers are four years ahead of the average citizen in the progression of heart disease. (Violanti, John)

Police officers as a group tend to have **higher-than-average** pulse rates and diastolic blood pressure. (Violanti, John)

Four of the ten most costly health conditions affecting employers are related to heart disease and stroke. Employees with heart disease and heart disease risk factors cost employers thousands of dollars more than healthy employees each year through higher insurance. (Goetzel, Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 2003)

The healthy eating program includes heart-healthy living tips including how to decrease dietary sodium levels and naturally lower cholesterol levels.

## **Problem #3**

### **Stress, police officers and disease**

"Policing is a psychologically stressful work environment filled with danger, high demands, ambiguity in work encounters, human misery and exposure to death," explains Dr. John Violanti, a 23-year veteran of the New York State Police.

Police officers are at an increased risk for stress-related disease more so than the general population, reports Dr. Violanti. Police officers are at an increased risk for:

- Certain types of cancer, primarily digestive types
- Heart disease
- Cirrhosis of the liver and digestive diseases increase as duration of police service increase.

The Canadian Policy Research Networks has estimated that stress-related absences cost employers about \$3.5 billion each year (Duxbury and Higgins 2001). Health-care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress, explains Statistics Canada. Long-term stress can be costly to employers as it can lead to increased absenteeism and productivity declines.

The pressures of law enforcement put police officers at an increased for:

- High blood pressure
- Increased cortisol levels
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

The health eating program can help police officers better manage stress and cope with the negative aspects of shift work. The healthy eating program includes tips on how to increase quality sleep hours, fall asleep sooner and support the body during the times of stress through B-vitamins, protein and omega-3 fatty acids.

## **Solution**

### **The Healthy Eating Program: E-Learning**

Eight, ten-minute blocks which include the following topics:

- Nutrition 101: The Action Plan
- Healthy Waist Line Strategies
- The skinny on Fat & Protein
- Reading Labels: Facts & Fables
- Eating on the Run
- Sleep, Stress & Shift Work
- Heart Healthy Living
- Supplements User Manual