

# Investing in Health & Wellness for the Tourism Sector



## **PAHO/CAIC CONFERENCE ON CARIBBEAN PRIVATE SECTOR RESPONSE TO CHRONIC DISEASES**

**(PORT-OF-SPAIN, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, 8 MAY 2008)**



Jointly sponsored by PAHO & the  
Caribbean Association of  
Industry & Commerce (CAIC)





- **Where is Absenteeism in Barbados**
- **Causes of Illness**
- **Wellness & Enhanced Lifestyle Programme**
- **Workplace Wellness**
- **Developing a Wellness Programme**
- **Accelerating the Private Sector response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean**
- **Conclusions**

# Where is Absenteeism in Barbados?



- Recent Absenteeism study carried out by UWI January 2008
- 24 Companies over 3 months
- No of employees 4,500
- Total Absenteeism days 10,480
- Absenteeism Rate % = 3.6% (USA rate 2%)
- Estimated cost of US\$472,605 (based on average wage data)
- Annual cost approx US\$2M. (Not including real costs – lack of productivity, goodwill, etc.)

# Cost to Employers



- **Approximate labour force = 145,000 pax**
- **Cost suggests hundreds of millions of dollars per year.**
- **Lowering Absenteeism should be a priority**
- **Reduce absenteeism to 3%**
- **Cost reduction benefit would fund expenditures that directly address the causes of absenteeism**
- **A sustainable approach to absenteeism management**

# Identify the root causes of absenteeism



- **Causes of uncertified absenteeism – perceptions of procedural justice**
- **Commitment**
- **Job Satisfaction**
- **Weather**
- **Personal Errands**
- **Causes of Certified absenteeism – physical health**
- **Work-family/family-work conflicts**
- **Need for improvement in management practices**
- **Rapid changes in the industry generating stress**

# Absenteeism by employee demographics



- Older employees were less likely to be absent than younger employees
- Different values & attitudes towards work
- May not have the same family commitments
- Personal commitment -Longer periods of services therefore greater level of satisfaction & loyalty
- No significant gender difference

# Costs



- **Employees did not see certified sick leave as “Costing” their employers much due to NIS**
- **Therefore certified sick leave used**
- **Medical Insurance costs – claims experience high**

# Causes of Illness



- Chronic diseases most common
- Heart & blood disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV/aids & lung diseases
- Often occur in middle to later years
- May not manifest themselves for many years
- Present for many years
- High cost of provision for health care
- Equals considerable absenteeism, loss of earning capacity & reduced productivity.

# Chronic Diseases



More likely to occur in the following settings:

- Tobacco use & exposure
- Unhealthy diet
- Physical inactivity
- Harmful use of alcohol
- Unprotected sexual activity

# Chronic Diseases



Occur more frequently:

- In poverty
- Performing dangerous stressful work
- Function in polluted work environments
- Low political economic power
- Discrimination – work & life related conditions that lead to “mental stress & sustained angst” of one kind or another.

# Chronic Diseases



## **Additional causes:**

- **Inadequate expenditure on health**
- **A bias on health expenditure towards treatment as opposed to prevention of disease**
- **International promotion of soft drinks & alcohol**
- **International & local fast food restaurants**

# Action for Prevention



- A commitment at the highest level politically to raise awareness for prevention control
- Establishment & strengthening of national policies & plans for the prevention of chronic diseases
- Promotion of specific measures & interventions to reduce the risk factors of, & conditions predisposing to, chronic diseases
- Promotion of partnerships
- Establishment of systems for monitoring & tracking chronic diseases
- Promotion of research for the prevention & control

# BHTA/BWU collaboration



- **Tourism is a labour-intensive industry**
- **Economy in Barbados reliant on Tourism**
- **Realisation of a need to help workers**
- **Collective agreement for all hotel workers**
- **Meetings with the union**
- **Collaborative approach**
- **Decision to set up wellness committees for all hotels**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> phase wellness committees for other tourist entities**

# Developing a Wellness Program



- **Must be apart of overall company strategy**
- **Health & Safety legislation & work place policies or programs to be in place to provide a basis for a wellness program**
- **Training is essential to any program set up**
- **Inclusion of all parties**
- **Joint labour/management committee set up**
- **Impossible to deal with wellness in isolation from health & safety**

# What are the key elements of a wellness program?



- **Objectives:** Needed to know what we wanted to see happen as a result of the efforts.
- **Target audience:** who was the program for? All staff? Or only certain groups?
- **Type of program or campaign:** What tone will the program have? Informative? Fun? Fearful?

# How to implement a programme



**Step 1 Take ownership & leadership & get support from the “top”**

- Find a leader

**Step 2**

- Get support from Everyone
- Union
- Management
- HR professionals

# How to implement a programme



- **Medical or occupational health staff**
- **Health & safety professionals**
- **Local groups e.g.,**
  - **Public Health**
  - **Cancer Society**
  - **Heart & Stroke Foundation**
  - **Diabetes, etc.**

# What is already in place?



## **Step 3 – Acknowledge current activities & collect baseline data**

- **Research if hotels had any existing programs**
- **Collect information re any groups carrying out activities e.g. staff walking groups**

# Research



## Step 4

- Schedules for hotel workers can be challenging to carry out research so all shifts must be covered
- Design a survey to obtain needs, attitudes & preferences re the programme
- Full-length (confidential external interviewee)
- An open one-to-one interview
- A mini-survey
- Suggestion boxes

# Research



## Step 5

- Surveys can be conducted by:
- Hosting a luncheon round table
- Sending out an informal email questionnaire
- Sending a survey with the pay slip
- Conducting a survey available on the hotels intranet site if available

# Develop a plan



- Identify what needs to be done
- Prioritise the needs
- Set realistic targets & timelines
- Have short-term & long-term goals
- Plan how & when the program will be initiated
- Plan how to maintain interest
- Know what resources you need for each step

# Delivery of program



**Deliver the programme by organising activities into**

- **Education and Awareness – providing knowledge**
- **Skill building – getting staff actively involved in changing their behaviour**
- **Work environment – changes in the workplace to support the initiative**

# Monitor, Evaluate & Maintain the program



- Review the programme
- What is working or not?
- When reviewing outcomes evaluate the program based on the aims & objectives set at the beginning
- Maintain the program – use the results of the review to gauge what is working , what to change or enhance

# Workplace Wellness



Occupation,  
Health &  
Safety

Work  
Place

Voluntary  
Health  
Services

Organisational  
Change

# Awareness-Raising



O.H & S

VHS

Org. Change

Awareness  
Raising

Raise awareness about health risks associated with certain hazardous chemicals

Raise awareness using a company newsletter about the wide range of benefits of being physically active & the detriments of being inactive

Raise awareness about the importance of providing input to management about job issues or concerns e.g., stress

# Education & Skill Building



**O.H & S**

**VHS**

**Org. Change**

**Education  
&  
Skill  
Building**

**Provide demos &  
training on how to  
handle hazardous  
products**

**Assist & Teach  
employees to  
set small  
realistic,  
physical  
activity goals**

**Provide  
information on  
the best ways to  
give constructive  
feedback to  
management**

# Environmental Support



O. H & S

VHS

Org. Change

Environ-  
mental  
Support

Provide  
necessary  
safety  
equipment &  
safe facilities

Provide  
fitness  
facilities in  
the workplace

Provide  
childcare  
facilities

# Policy Development



O. H & S

VHS

Org. Change

Policy  
Development

Mandate rigorous assessment of possible hazardous materials before employees are exposed to them

Allow employees flex time – start early or stay late – take a longer lunch hour to facilitate exercise time

Policies which allow employees a certain amount of work time each year to pursue professional development

# Policy Development



- Clear written policies needed to set a standard for all workers to follow
- Health related policies can improve productivity & morale
- Enhance employee satisfaction
- Reduce lost time & staff turnover
- Encourage & support physical activity, good nutrition, flex time
- Demonstrates an organisations commitment to employees & the corporate values to health

# Programme Components



- Education of all employees
- Benefits & how to follow wellness & enhanced lifestyle programmes
- Education takes place at the workplace & away from workplace
- Notice board educational advertisements, healthy lifestyle newsletters, health/wellness “tips” in pay packets, seminars & workshops
- Print media, TV & radio educational ads

# Programme Components



- Encouraged the banning of tobacco in all indoor workplaces
- Provide assistance to workers that do smoke
- Lobbying for “No Smoking” legislation that conforms to the provision of the framework Convention on Tobacco control.
- Hotels offered healthy foods in vending machines, company canteens, &canteens
- Advocate healthy foods to be made available at affordable prices nationally.

# Programme Components



**Training programmes for middle management & supervisors**

- **Managing with care**
- **Effective communication skills**
- **Designing of effective orientations skills**
- **Understanding & motivating the new worker**

**All with an emphasis & bias on wellness & enhanced lifestyles.**

# Programme Components



- Foster a culture of wholesome wellness & enhanced lifestyle at the workplace – Money management
- Wellness & enhanced lifestyle awards for employees
- Establish 24 hour care facility for children
- Provision of physical fitness facilities at workplace
- Get fit challenge & competitions for staff e.g., Group weight loss programme
- Awards of points for physical activities to be redeemed for prizes

# Programme Components



- **Establishment of a West Coast and South Coast Sports Club**
- **Negotiated & obtained financial benefits aimed at encouraging enhanced lifestyles**
- **Gym discounts for tourism workers**
- **Discounts on health checks by recognised health societies**
- **Discount coupons**

# Implementation, Organisation & Management



- An “Oversight Committee” set up
- Senior leadership of BHTA & the BWU
- Tourism Wellness & Enhanced Lifestyle Patrol
- Persons trained as “Wellness Champions”
- Implementation Committee was established
- Consists of 4 BHTA reps, 4 BWU reps & 6 wellness champions
- Individual company based Wellness patrols set up to implement activities at & within & among staff employees.

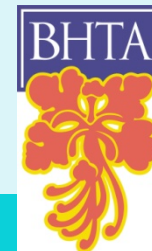
# Funding & Financing



- This was provided by the BWU
- The BHTA Tourism Fund
- A subvention is being sort from Government
- Pilot project to be implemented for other sectors once proven to be successful



- ***Accelerating the Private Sector Response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean***



# HIV/AIDS in Barbados and the Region



- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that can lead to AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome).
- About 1.5% of the Barbadian population aged between 15-49 is estimated to be infected with HIV/AIDS\*.
- It is recognized that HIV/AIDS will affect every workplace with prolonged staff illness, absenteeism and the concomitant need to replace and retrain workers, thereby impacting on productivity.

*\*UNAIDS Report, 2006*

# HIV/AIDS in the Tourism Industry



- The tourism industry is a major source of employment and economic development for the Caribbean region. The driving force behind the industry is its human capital. Therefore ensuring the sustainability of the industry is hinged upon improving the health and wellness of the work force.
- In order to address HIV/AIDS within the context of health and wellness, the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA) is supporting an innovative project which has been initiated in Barbados entitled **“Accelerating the Private Sector Response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean”**.

**INVESTING IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**  
*Accelerating the Private Sector Response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean*



## **PURPOSE**

To support active private sector involvement in HIV and AIDS strategies in the Caribbean, initially in the hotel and tourism sector in Jamaica and Barbados, working in partnership with People Living with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable groups.

# INVESTING IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

## *Accelerating the Private Sector Response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean*



## OBJECTIVES

1. To effect positive changes in the ***knowledge, attitudes and sexual practices*** among formal and informal tourism workers and key populations
2. To ***reduce stigma and discrimination*** against tourism workers in the *formal and informal* tourism sector living with HIV/AIDS .
3. To increase the number of workplaces in the *formal* tourism sector with ***HIV/AIDS Workplace Polices***, implemented and enforced through policy development and dissemination workshops.
4. To strengthen ***Care, Treatment, and Support*** services for PLWHA, key populations (vulnerable and high-risk groups) and workers.
5. To ***build capacity*** and strengthen institutional and management structures of private sector and collaborating NGOs.
6. To create and ***document 'responsible tourism' models*** that encompass HIV and AIDS and best practices emerging from the project implementation period.
7. To ensure ***effective co-ordination*** between private sector, PLWHA and other vulnerable group NGOs & CBOs implementing HIV/AIDS programmes.

# Project Partners

## FUNDING AGENCY

- Department for International Development UK (DFID)

## MANAGEMENT AGENCIES

- International HIV/AIDS Alliance
- Associates for International Development Inc. (AID Inc.) - responsible for Barbados implementation

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

- The AIDS Foundation
- BHTA
- CHAT
- CARE
- Ministry of Health
- NCC (Lifeguards)
- UGLAAB

## PARTICIPATING TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS

- *Accra Beach Hotel & Resort*
- *Almond Beach Hotel Group*
- *Coral Reef*
- *Discovery Bay Hotel*
- *Elegant Hotels Group*
- *GEMS*
- *Hilton Barbados*
- *Palm Beach Hotel Group*
- *Sandy Lane Hotel*
- *Seabreeze Hotel*



Leaders in our local and regional tourism industry came together to pledge their commitment to addressing HIV/AIDS and Health & Wellness

***“I solemnly pledge as a partner in the tourism sector, to take personal responsibility to act now to make a difference in the health and wellness and HIV and AIDS Experience. First for me, my family, my community and my business, to commit time, manpower, money and energy to make it happen and to initiate this in the next 90 days with the assistance of our partners.”***

*Project Inception Phase Meeting Sep, 2006*

# Some Activities and Output



- Annual Health Fairs in participating hotels
- FREE bi-monthly medical and nutritional health clinics
- Training of peer educators and peer counsellors in the workplace
- Development of BCC (behaviour change communication) material specific to the tourism sector
- Development of a national tourism HIV/AIDS workplace policy and dissemination through a national tourism HIV/AIDS policy forum

# Summary



- **Health & wellness Lifestyle Programmes are critical**
- **All aspects, health, money matters, operations**
- **Support services - other private sector entities**
- **Be confidential**
- **Be sensitive**
- **Be patient**
- **Make it fun!**

