



# Face Up to Your Health!

Let's face it – our nation is getting heavier. Public health officials refer to obesity as an epidemic and see it as one of our top health threats in the United States. Employers can help by providing education and awareness, as well as a supportive environment that fosters weight loss success. Offering better snack choices in your vending machines is just one of the steps we can take in the right direction.

Check out **Face Up to Your Health** from the BlueResource<sup>SM</sup> Communication Program!

**Face Up to Your Health** provides artwork and messages that encourage your employees to make better food choices at the vending machines. Communications include:

- Posters
- Fliers
- Table tents
- Signs for vending machines, including 12 monthly tips to peak interest
- E-banner and e-mail copy



Our color-coded system gives your employees the opportunity, at a glance, to choose a healthier option: **Green** for the best choice; **Yellow** for foods you should indulge in occasionally; and **Red** for what to avoid. This program also includes nutritional analysis for many snacks and tips for working with your vending service.

When piloted with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois employees, **Face Up to Your Health** showed tremendous initial results and is continuing to be successful over time. Heightened employee awareness yielded:

- More products sold in machines, boosting commission by 24 percent
- Increased sales of green and yellow products; decreased sale of red products





# Ready, Set, Go!

After reviewing **Face Up to Your Health** communications, consider these tips to get your program started.

## Engage senior management.

- Obtain buy-in from your executives and ask for their participation when promoting the program. Their support is key for a successful program.
- Are your employees in various locations? If so, recruit a team of Health Advocates to champion your campaign in their sites.



## Secure snack vendor commitment.

- In your company, who coordinates the vendor contracts of your snack machines? Schedule a meeting and get this person on board with **Face Up to Your Health**. Executive support might be influential, if needed.
- Meet with your snack vendor. You'll need to develop a strong working relationship to make this program a success. Decide how many healthy snacks from each color category that you'll want to offer in your vending machines. Give the vendor the color-coded nutritional analysis of snacks, and ask that they coordinate snacks with the colors coded for the appropriate category.
- Work with your vendor to determine color coding within your vending machines. Our experiences include:
  - Velcro strips – some of the snacks would hang on the Velcro and not fall into the bin
  - Magnets – they wouldn't hold well if a snack hits them on the way down
  - Color-coded price tabs – our final solution; these tabs could easily be placed in the price slots



## Craft your communication plan.

Develop a communication strategy and plan that identifies responsibilities, determines budget and defines time line. Keep the following items in mind:

- What communications work best for your employees – print, electronic or a mix of both?
- Will you distribute promotional giveaways?
- What about a kick-off event? It's a great way to create a buzz around your workplace to peak employees' interest. Include your executives and management in your event so they can show support for this program.
- How will you engage your employees throughout the year? Try distributing **Face Up to Your Health** fliers, offering samples of "green" choices from the vending machines, like peanuts or pretzels, and placing table tents on your cafeteria and break room tables.



## Commit to ongoing evaluation.

- Monitor your vending machines to ensure restocking meets the color-coded criteria.
- Ask your vendor to provide a report of sales by each category so you can track your success.

We would love to hear your feedback! Please contact your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois representative to let us know of your success as you establish a healthy culture in your organization.

