

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS

## CORRECTION SUPERVISORS COUNCIL

CSEA, SEIU LOCAL 2001

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Issue One

### Welcome to the first edition of our Health and Wellness newsletter.

We hope to make this a quarterly publication to keep you informed on one of the most important aspects of your life, which is your health.

Our efforts began over a decade ago when Dr. Martin Cherniak of the UConn Health Center approached our Union about the promotion of health in the workplace. CSEA believed that health promotion for Correctional Officers and Supervisors would be the perfect place to start. If we could do health promotion in DOC, we could do it anywhere. And we were right.

Our efforts have gained the support of DOC Commissioners, past and present. A breakthrough moment occurred when former Commissioner Arnone told our Labor/Management Committee that he was tired of going to funerals of members that died way too young. We told him that in collaboration with UConn Health Center and the Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplaces (CPH-NEW), we would begin a participatory process with our members to improve their health. And so, we began our journey.

As a result of our work so far and the advocacy of Commissioner Semple, the idea of health promotion has spread to other State Departments of Correction. Ultimately, our goal in Connecticut is to build a culture of health and wellness among our fellow union members in the Correction Supervisors Council. The decision to build a culture within our own supervisory membership is so that our program lasts through changes of administration in DOC and even with new Union leadership.

### In our first issue, we will cover:

- Our new contract language on health and wellness
- Results of our sleep study
- A profile of our UConn colleagues
- Survey results from the 2015 all membership health assessment
- The new Employees Assistance Program initiative

Your feedback is important to us. You can send your ideas and comments to Union President Julius Preston at [jpreston@csea760.com](mailto:jpreston@csea760.com).

### OUR UCONN HEALTH CENTER PARTNERS

**Alicia Dugan** is an assistant professor at the UConn Health Center. She earned her PhD from the University of Connecticut in Industrial/Organizational Psychology.



Alicia also has a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology. Alicia has co-authored and has published 16 peer-reviewed articles in academic journals. She recently received a grant as a Co-Principal Investigator from the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Alicia will research, Change in the Way We Work: Non-Standard Workday and Work and Family. In her spare time, Alicia likes to do yoga and play with her 5 year-old son.



**Sara Namazi** is a PhD student in Public Health at the UConn Health Center. Her PhD dissertation is an examination of the impact of work and

family stressors on correctional family life and mental health. She is expected to defend her dissertation this Spring. Sara has a Master's Degree in Environmental Science. She has co-authored and published 7 peer-reviewed articles in academic journals.

## SLEEP STUDY

We would like to thank the 100 supervisors who participated in the recent sleep study with our partners from the UConn Health Center. The data from the study is currently being analyzed and will be reported in the next issue of our Health and Wellness newsletter.

The 100 supervisors were divided into two groups of 50 people each. One group received a sleep health training only and the other group received the training and a sleep tracking app created specifically for Correctional supervisors.

The purpose of the study was to see whether the sleep health training and tracking app were useful in improving sleep, alone and in combination, and to determine whether or not there was:

- Increase in sleep knowledge
- Improvements in sleep behavior
- Increase in self-awareness of sleep quantity and quality
- Increase in actual sleep quantity
- Increase in actual sleep quality
- Improvements in health outcomes

Stay tuned for the results of the study.

## MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

In 2015, CSC along with the UConn Health Center conducted a health and attitude assessment of our membership. This survey has been the touchstone for our work on health and wellness.

The results of the survey were published in the September 2016 edition of the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (JOEM). This was the first-ever published article on the health outcomes of correctional supervisors. Previously, a study was published in 2006 that only related to the job stress of correctional supervisors. The JOEM article entitled "Work Characteristics as Predictors of Correctional Supervisors' Health Outcomes" was authored by the faculty and staff at the UConn Health Center and the University of Connecticut.

The survey was designed to gather our members' view of health and wellness. The survey provided an overall assessment of members' attitudes related to health and wellness, as well as our members' perceptions of their health behaviors.

The results of the survey were a mix of good news and bad news. The bad news was most of our correctional supervisors (89%) recognized that they have a shorter life expectancy and two-thirds think they will die younger than workers in other jobs. Additional bad news was the high level of stress at work (82%); the lack of sleep (with most members getting less than 6 hours of sleep per night); and proper nutrition. Also of note, the average amount of overtime is 12.8 hours per week, which means a supervisor in one of the most stressful work environments works more than 50 hours per week. The most startling finding was that members who work a double shift average less than 2.5 hours of sleep that night.

The good news from the survey was that our members want to change and work on activities related to reducing stress (79.7%), improving quality and quantity of sleep (71.5%), having better eating habits (66.5%), increasing working out/physical activity (62%), and participating in weight loss (58.9%). These responses led to our first intervention on sleep which is reported in this newsletter.

Following the survey results we wanted to drill down on the relatively low life expectancy of Correctional Officers and Supervisors. Nationally, the average life expectancy for Correction Officers and

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE

In our recently approved contract (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2021), we established a Health and Wellness Committee. This is the first of a kind contract provision for Connecticut State employees. The contract provisions include:

- Entitling each member one paid day of training a year specifically on health and wellness.
- Establishing a joint labor/management committee on health and wellness to develop training programs; and
- Allocating \$10,000 per year beginning in July 2019 to fund initiatives under this program.

Union President Julius Preston has made a request of Commissioner Semple to appoint the management members of the Committee. Once appointed, we look to move quickly to establish the training program for this contract year. It is our goal for the first training to take place this Spring.

### Health and Wellness Union Members

Our Union's health and wellness members are: Julius Preston, Union President; Millie Brown, Union Executive Vice-President; Neal Liskey, Union Chief Steward; Wayne Cole, Design Team Facilitator, and Vinny Steele, Retired Correctional Lieutenant.

Supervisors is 58 years. In Connecticut, based upon ten years of data from the Comptroller's Office, the average life expectancy is 66 years. While Connecticut correctional employees are living on average 8 years longer than the national norm, their life span is 15 years shorter than other Connecticut residents.

One final note from the survey is that the State's Health Enhancement Program, which has now finished its sixth year, is viewed favorably by the majority of our members. Nearly all our members are compliant with the requirements of the program, and almost all now have primary care doctors to manage their health care needs.

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Public Act 17-239 passed by the General Assembly during the last legislative session and signed into law by Governor Malloy calls for the DOC, within available appropriations, to provide training to promote wellness among employees who interact with inmates. These measures are to include employee assistance programs, peer support programs, and stress management programs.

Our Union has been at the fore-front of employee wellness for over a decade and we are pleased that the General Assembly recognizes the need for such interventions. In our recently negotiated contract, a provision under our succession planning article calls for peer support for supervisors.

Our Union has also been investigating employee

assistance programs including the employee-driven program for correctional employees in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts' program has been in existence for 30 years.

Our Union's goal is to create a pro-active program that provides assistance to employees before a crisis occurs or intervention is required due to acute problems. Our members work in one of the most stressful environments and, when coupled with everyday stress of life and family, an effective employee assistance program can help our members manage both their work and family life.

We anticipate having further fruitful discussions with DOC administration in the near future on an employee assistance program.