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HEALTH ENHANCEMENT RESEARCH ORGANIZATION (HERO) ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF BILL WHITMER

*Co-founder and wellness industry innovator built nation's first professional
organization dedicated to employee health management*

MINEAPOLIS (September 25, 2012)—The [Health Enhancement Research Organization](#) (HERO) announced today that Bill Whitmer, the organization's co-founder and current director of research, will retire at the end of September.

Whitmer, who established HERO along with Mark Dundon in 1996, has been a mainstay in the organization, serving a variety of roles over the years. His ability to garner participation from industry thought leaders and to convene a diverse group of business leaders has contributed to the steady growth of HERO, which now includes more than 80 member organizations.

Over the years, Whitmer has established a following in the health and wellness industry, starting with his efforts to create one of the country's first full-service employee health management provider-consulting firms, which was called Wellness South, in 1973. In addition, Whitmer was the co-principal investigator on a \$3 million National Institutes of Health research project that centered on cost containment, he authored numerous textbook chapters on health management, and has been published in peer-reviewed journals.

"Bill has dedicated a tremendous amount of time, talent and energy to building HERO and establishing it as a well-respected organization that can meet the changing needs of employers and the changing face of health and health care," said Jerry Noyce, president and CEO of HERO. "We're grateful for his leadership over the years and will do our very best to continue his legacy."

Noyce, who assumed the helm at HERO in 2010, added that Whitmer's ability to drive collaboration and innovation by bringing together a broad spectrum of business leaders to share ideas, to identify research needs, to learn from each other, and to drive the development of industry best practices has given the organization a solid base for future growth in a changing health care and business environment.

"Our ability early on to prove that there is a direct relationship between health habits and health care costs was a significant factor in our success as an organization," said Whitmer. "Add to this the fact that leading health and wellness experts were involved and were driving ground-breaking research about health in the workplace, which was a natural draw for business leaders."

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Whitmer said he plans to dedicate a portion of his time in retirement to initiatives that reduce obesity, while also staying actively involved in health care reform.

“I’m proud to have been part of something that over time, has become a positive force for employers and a whole industry of health care professionals. HERO was designed to bring together a significant number of employee health management experts and thought leaders,” said Whitmer. “Not only have we accomplished this over the years, but we’ve also made significant strides in engaging new health management professionals who are destined to become the thought leaders of tomorrow. It is because of this foundation that I anticipate the role of HERO will become even more prominent in the future.”

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Based in Edina, Minn., the Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the creation and dissemination of employee health management research, education, policy, strategy, and leadership.

For more information:

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