



NEWS RELEASE

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What the boss really thinks about employee health: New HERO survey shows more than 90 percent see connection between health and productivity, performance

Edina, Minn. (February 16, 2015)—Think your boss is an advocate for your good health? Chances are, he or she is pulling for you to stay healthy for a variety of reasons, including the belief that good employee health influences workplace performance and productivity. According to a new survey from HERO (the Health Enhancement Research Organization), more than 90 percent of surveyed business leaders said health has a very significant or significant influence on productivity and performance. Business leaders in education services were more likely than others to connect good health to productivity on the job, while government leaders were more likely to connect health to job performance.

The findings from this HERO business leader survey are the result of an effort to measure and understand how business leaders view productivity and performance and to determine if they believe employee health contributes to overall corporate performance. More than 500 business leaders from across the country, representing a variety of industries (health care services, manufacturing, education, wholesale/retail, transportation, financial services, government and others) and company sizes (from less than 100 employees to more than 50,000 employees) completed the online survey between May and July 2014. The full survey report can be found on the HERO website at http://hero-health.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/HPP-Business-Leader-Survey-Full-Report_FINAL.pdf.

“For several years now, we have seen companies of all sizes increasing their investment in employee health through workplace health management programs,” said Jessica Grossmeier, vice president of research, HERO. “While this movement is most commonly connected to a desire to control health care costs, our interactions with employers led us to believe that there was more at play here and that employers were realizing greater, long-term value from good employee health. This survey opens the door to a dialog with business leaders that could influence the future of workplace wellness.”

The HERO business leader survey evaluated not only how business leaders differentiate between commonly used terms, such as productivity and performance, but to what degree they feel employee health influences factors like morale, engagement and overall corporate performance.

More specifically, the HERO survey revealed that:

- Productivity and performance are related, but different concepts, according to 91 percent of business leaders. This has implications for program evaluation and how we use such terms in the business case for investment in workforce health.
- The top drivers of productivity and performance include employee engagement with their work and having the right tools to do one's job. Health was listed as one of the top three drivers by more than 20 percent of business leaders. New research should demonstrate how workplace health management programs influence productivity and performance directly through improved worker health and indirectly through improvements to employee engagement with their work.
- Most business leaders (57 percent) said their organization's leaders viewed health as an investment in human capital or as part of the organization's core business strategy. Less than a third of business leaders view investments in health primarily as a health care cost containment strategy. This is important for how workplace health management programs are positioned within an organization and we may begin to see these programs being aligned with broader functional oversight, rather than with the corporate benefits function.

According to Nikki Hudsmith, vice president of operations, Performance pH and co-author on the HERO business leader survey, these findings are significant because they demonstrate the need for a comprehensive approach to improving health that supports employees at all levels and that stems from a healthy workplace culture.

"A company's executive leaders can believe in the importance of good health as it relates to performance on and off the job, but if the front-line managers don't share this belief or if the work environment isn't supportive of healthy behaviors, then companies will fail to see the results and long-term benefits on their bottom line," said Hudsmith.

The survey also examined responses from different leadership positions (senior executives versus middle management) and found that:

- Executive leaders are more likely (97 percent) than middle managers to say that health influences performance
- Most business leaders (77 percent) felt their organization's leaders were committed to improving the health of their workforce

To learn more about HERO research, including this study, visit www.hero-health.org.

About HERO – 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. HERO was established in 1996 as a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 corporation to create high quality employee health management (EHM) research, especially that dealing with the impact of modifiable health risks on health care costs. To learn more, visit www.the-hero.org. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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