



NEWS RELEASE

(For immediate release)

HERO ushers in new research leadership

- *Health and well-being research organization names Sara Johnson, Ph.D. to new position of senior research fellow; promotes Mary Imboden, Ph.D., to director of research.*
- *Jessica Grossmeier, Ph.D., departs to pursue a sabbatical after 25 years of groundbreaking population health research and industry leadership.*

RALEIGH, NC (January 11, 2021) — The Health Enhancement Research Organization ([HERO](#)) announced today that it has ushered in new research leadership as Jessica Grossmeier, Ph.D., stepped down from her position as vice president of research to pursue a sabbatical. Meanwhile, Sara Johnson, Ph.D., co-president and CEO at Pro-Change Behavior Systems, Inc. assumes the new position of senior research fellow for HERO and Mary Imboden, Ph.D., has been promoted to director of research for the not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to advancing workplace well-being research and best practices.

“We are eternally grateful for the leadership and innovative approach to workplace well-being research and industry collaboration that Jessica has provided during her years with HERO. Even before becoming an official member of our team, Jessica was a prominent and dedicated volunteer and was responsible for numerous groundbreaking HERO research studies,” said Karen Moseley, president and CEO of HERO. “While we’re sad to see Jessica leave, we have every confidence that Sara and Mary will lead our research efforts in the right direction as we move through 2021 and face a fresh set of well-being challenges and opportunities.”

Grossmeier joined HERO in 2014 as vice president of research, after more than a decade of volunteer leadership on a number of HERO research projects. Prior to HERO, she was vice president of research for StayWell Health Management. During her career, she has authored more than 82 research studies, articles, and book chapters, including some of the first-ever studies on the use and effectiveness of financial incentives for workplace well-being.

“Increasing our understanding of the effectiveness of well-being strategies is more important than ever as employers are balancing ever-changing workplace dynamics with the need to deliver value on their well-being investment,” said Grossmeier. “Sara and Mary bring both industry expertise and a fresh perspective that will be essential for guiding the continued evolution of HERO research to align with changing marketplace needs.”

In her newly created role as senior research fellow, Johnson will provide research thought leadership and identify funding opportunities for new studies through grants and industry partnerships. She assumes this role in addition to her continued co-leadership of Pro-Change. Johnson is also the chair of The Art and Science of Health Promotion Conference and co-editor of *Knowing Well, Being Well*.

“I’ve attended and presented at the HERO Forum for many years and have collaborated with the brightest minds in population health research through HERO-sponsored research. I’m thrilled to be joining the organization in a more official capacity, particularly given the urgent need for our field to continue to evaluate and disseminate evidence-based initiatives that enhance well-being and equity for individuals, organizations, and communities,” said Johnson.

Johnson will work hand-in-hand with Imboden who will have oversight of all work related to the HERO Health and Well-being Best Practices Scorecard in Collaboration with Mercer®, along with growth and management of the HERO Preferred Provider network, and oversight of the volunteer HERO Research Committee. Imboden joined HERO in 2018 as membership manager and research associate after receiving her Ph.D. from Ball State University in clinical exercise physiology. Imboden is an assistant professor of exercise science at George Fox University. Prior to joining HERO, she served as a clinical research coordinator at Wake Forest Baptist Health and worked with the CEO Pledge for Physical Activity sponsored by the National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity.

“HERO has consistently produced industry-leading research that has real-world applications for employers who are committed to improving workplace and community health. It has been an honor to work with Jessica the past two years, and I am excited for the opportunity to influence the future direction of the organization at such a pivotal time for our industry,” said Imboden.

Changes to the HERO research team took effect January 1, 2021.

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About HERO – Based in Raleigh, NC, HERO (the Health Enhancement Research Organization) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 corporation that was established in 1997. HERO is dedicated to identifying and sharing best practices that improve the health and well-being of employees, their families and communities. To learn more, visit www.hero-health.org. Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/heroehm) @heroehm, [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/heroehm), or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/heroehm).