



NEWS RELEASE

New report shows influence of leadership support on workplace well-being outcomes

NEW YORK and WACONIA, MN (December 19, 2018) — A new report from the Health Enhancement Research Organization ([HERO](#)) and [Mercer](#) offers fresh insights into the influence of leadership and organizational support on workplace well-being outcomes.

Findings derived from the [2018 Progress Report](#) for the HERO Health and Well-being Best Practices Scorecard in Collaboration with Mercer® show that well-being initiatives fare better when leaders are visibly supportive and involved. In particular, companies reported better outcomes when leaders recognize employees who have achieved success and when leaders actively participate in health and well-being initiatives themselves – two relatively simple and low-cost ways to boost performance.

“Used by employers around the world for over a decade, the Scorecard has demonstrated its ability to track the practices associated with effective health and well-being initiatives and to give employers benchmarks they can use to measure and improve their own efforts,” said Jessica Grossmeier, Ph.D. Vice President of Research, HERO. “Intuitively, we’ve known that company leaders have significant influence on well-being program success, but data from the Scorecard is making it easier to quantify just how important this connection is.”

The HERO Scorecard database includes responses from about 1,000 employers, allowing researchers to study relationships of specific practices to performance measures such as participation rates, population health risk, and medical plan costs. For example, one study (see p. 47) found that the practice most associated with higher participation rates is the presence of leadership that publicly recognizes employees for their wellness efforts and achievements. Such organizations report an average health assessment completion rate of 61 percent of eligible employees, compared to just 48 percent for organizations in which leaders do not recognize employees.

Another study (see p. 32) looked at just organizations with high-scoring programs (the top quartile of overall best-practice scores) and found that companies in which leaders recognized employees for their healthy actions and outcomes were more likely to report that their well-being initiatives have resulted in measurable improvement both in population health (91 percent) and medical plan cost (87 percent) than the companies not recognizing employee success (83 percent and 81 percent, respectively).

Finally, a third study (p. 37) found that organizations whose leaders actively participate in health and well-being initiatives reported higher median rates of both employee satisfaction with health

and well-being programs (83 percent) and employee perception of organizational support (85 percent) compared to organizations whose leaders did not actively participate (66 percent and 67 percent, respectively).

“These findings suggest organizations that want to improve employee well-being and impact spending should consider how they can bolster organizational support and leadership involvement in day-to-day well-being activities,” said Steven Noeldner, Senior Total Health Management Consultant, Mercer. “Even if you have an established, comprehensive program, a perceived lack of leadership support could prevent employees from participating and benefiting from these initiatives. Leadership support costs very little to implement and can be as simple as celebrating employee efforts or sharing personal well-being goals and practices.”

The HERO Scorecard also asks employers about other best practice areas, such as the use of incentives, strategic planning, comprehensive programs, and the breadth of programs offered. The 2018 Scorecard Progress Report highlights the following trends:

- There is a higher prevalence of reported health improvement in organizations that offer targeted lifestyle management services than in those that do not (29 percent vs. 9 percent). The results are similar when looking at medical cost trend (36 percent when targeted services are present vs. 10 percent when they are not).
- When employers offer financial incentives, 72 percent of employees report satisfaction with well-being initiatives, compared to 66 percent when employers do not offer incentives.
- 56 percent of employers have a formal, written strategic plan in place for well-being; these employers report better outcomes on health improvement and medical trend than those that do not.

About the HERO Scorecard

The HERO [Scorecard](#) launched in 2006 as a tool to help employers evaluate their health and well-being efforts against a comprehensive inventory of current best practices. The tool, available through the HERO website, is currently in its fourth edition and is available in both U.S. and international versions. To date, approximately 1,000 employers have completed the U.S. version and 200 have completed the international version.

The Scorecard asks employers to provide information about organizational and cultural support for employee health and well-being, specific program offerings, integration of health and well-being programs with other areas of the company, strategies to encourage participation (such as communications and rewards), program costs, and outcomes. After submitting the online scorecard, an employer receives best practice scores in six areas that contribute to employee well-being, along with benchmarks that show how they compare to national employers.

To learn more or to complete the HERO Scorecard, visit www.HERO-health.org. To download the 2018 Progress Report, please visit https://hero-health.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/6009559-HB-2018-HERO-Scorecard-Progress-Report_final.pdf

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About HERO – Based in Waconia, MN, HERO (the Health Enhancement Research Organization) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 corporation that was established in 1996. 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](#) @heroehm, [Facebook](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

About Mercer - [Mercer](#) delivers advice and technology-driven solutions that help organizations meet the health, wealth and career needs of a changing workforce. Mercer's more than 23,000 employees are based in 44 countries and the firm operates in over 130 countries. Mercer is a wholly owned subsidiary of [Marsh & McLennan Companies](#) (NYSE: MMC), the leading global professional services firm in the areas of risk, strategy and people. With nearly 65,000 colleagues and annual revenue over \$14 billion, through its market-leading companies including [Marsh](#), [Guy Carpenter](#) and [Oliver Wyman](#), Marsh & McLennan helps clients navigate an increasingly dynamic and complex environment. For more information, visit www.mercer.com. Follow Mercer on Twitter [@Mercer](#)