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POOR EMPLOYEE HEALTH HABITS DRIVE LOST PRODUCTIVITY ACCORDING TO MAJOR NEW STUDY OF NEARLY 20,000 AMERICAN WORKERS

Unhealthy Diet, Smoking and Lack of Exercise Have Significant Impact

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – (Aug. 6, 2012) – New findings demonstrate unhealthy individual lifestyle choices may result in substantially higher levels of lost productive work time, according to a new study published in the October issue of *Population Health Management*. The study, conducted with cross-sectional survey data from 19,803 employees working at three large, geographically dispersed companies, concluded that even one unhealthy behavior increases the likelihood of lost productivity. Employees with an unhealthy diet were 66 percent more likely to report having experienced a loss in productivity than those who regularly ate whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Employees who exercised only occasionally were 50 percent more likely to report having lower levels of productivity than employees who were regular exercisers. Smokers were 28 percent more likely to report suffering from a drop in productivity than non-smokers.

Researchers from Brigham Young University, the Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) and the Center for Health Research at Healthways analyzed the topic of “presenteeism” - being present at work, but not performing optimally - by demographic variables, healthy behaviors, physical health limitations and workplace conditions. Information was collected from participating individuals with Healthways’ Well-Being Assessment, the individual-level instrument designed to complement and correlate with the national and regional well-being data collected through the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index.

“Total health-related employee productivity loss accounts for 77 percent of all such loss and costs employers two to three times more than annual healthcare expenses,” said lead author Ray Merrill, a Professor in the Department of Health Science, Brigham Young University. “This study, which analyzes an unusually large and geographically dispersed population, represents a more comprehensive understanding of the multitude of factors that drive presenteeism, thereby improving employers’ ability to meaningfully address this issue.”

Findings related to physical health and healthy behaviors also revealed that employees who had difficulty exercising during the day were 96 percent more likely to have increased productivity loss. Those employees who rarely eat fruits, vegetables and other low-fat foods at work were 93 percent more likely to have a higher loss in productivity. In addition, those who did not believe their workplace environment would support them in becoming physically and emotionally healthier were more likely to have a drop in productivity levels.

“We know that comprehensively measuring well-being helps employers take steps to understand the drivers of lost productivity in their setting and take pertinent steps to reduce it. Our research confirms that employee productivity loss is associated with low well-being, poor health behaviors, elevated health risks, and the presence of chronic disease,” said Dr. James Pope, vice president and chief science officer, Healthways, Inc. “This information is significant because the number of employees with excess body fat, poor diets, diabetes and sedentary lifestyles has risen to unprecedented levels in the nation.”

Along with health-related factors, work-related factors such as not having enough time to perform job duties and insufficient technological support and or resources, had a strong and significant influence on worker productivity loss. Personal problems and financial stress also contributed substantially to productivity loss. Factors contributing less to a loss in productivity included physical limitations, depression or anxiety, inadequate job training and problems with supervisors and coworkers.

The study also revealed that a productivity loss was highest among those aged 30-39 and was lowest among those 60 and older. It was more prevalent among women than men and among those separated, divorced or widowed than married individuals. Clerical or office workers in the service and transportation industries experienced the highest levels of productivity loss. Experiencing the lowest level of productivity loss are employees in industries such as farming, forestry, fishing, construction and mining.

“It’s critical that companies look deeper at productivity loss and measure it to understand the impact it is making on their bottom line,” said Jerry Noyce, CEO of HERO. “Business leaders have the ability to reduce the factors that significantly impact productivity loss by implementing comprehensive, best practice workplace wellness programs focused on well-being improvement, which in turn, can lead to improvements in employee satisfaction, productivity and profitability for employers.”

About the Health Enhancement Research Organization

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. To learn more, visit www.the-hero.org.

About Healthways

Healthways (NASDAQ: HWAY) is the largest independent global provider of well-being improvement solutions. Dedicated to creating a healthier world one person at a time, the Company uses the science of behavior change to produce and measure positive change in well-being for our customers, which include employers, integrated health systems, hospitals, physicians, health plans, communities and government entities. We provide highly specific and personalized support for each individual and their team of experts to optimize each participant’s health and productivity and to reduce health-related costs. Results are achieved by addressing longitudinal health risks and care needs of everyone in a given population. The Company has scaled its proprietary technology infrastructure and delivery capabilities developed over 30 years and now serves approximately 40 million people on four continents. Learn more at www.healthways.com.