

NEWS RELEASE

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Workplace health management programs report greater success when spouses are included, new HERO Scorecard report finds

- Report shows positive influence of communications, leadership and extending wellness to spouses and families

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A new report from the Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) and Mercer indicates that employers who follow best practices for workplace health management programs are more likely to report improvements in medical cost trends, as well as improved employee health status.

In an analysis of data collected from more than 700 employers through the HERO Employee Health Management Best Practice Scorecard in Collaboration with Mercer, researchers found that the best practices most strongly associated with positive outcomes were:

- Including spouses in key components of the program
- Promoting all wellness activities under a single brand name
- Having a formal, written strategic plan with financial objectives
- Active participation by senior leadership in wellness programs

The HERO Scorecard provides employers with an inventory of best practices for successful health management, and lets them see how their program stacks up against those in similar organizations.

“As the HERO Scorecard database grows, so does our ability to test the relationships between specific best practices and outcomes,” said Steven Noeldner, PhD, Mercer partner and chair of the HERO Research Study Subcommittee. “For example, while it’s not surprising that effective employee communication is one of the keys to a successful program, this new study pinpoints the importance of giving the program a brand name.”

Extending the program to spouses also had a strong impact on outcomes. Employers that permit spouses to participate in lifestyle coaching programs reported an average employee participation rate that was twice as high as the rate among employers that don’t include spouses (28% compared to 14%). When spouses were included in key components of the health management

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program, employers were also more likely to report improvement in health risk and in medical trend.

The HERO Scorecard, which is available free of charge, provides employers with a means of evaluating their employee health management efforts. It is also a benchmarking tool, allowing them to compare their program and outcomes against companies of similar size and in similar industries. More than 800 companies have completed the HERO Scorecard, making it the most widely used resource of its kind.

“The HERO Scorecard gives employers access to a sophisticated level of evaluation and benchmarking that many would otherwise not have,” said Jerry Noyce, president and CEO of HERO.

Employers complete an online survey with information about their wellness initiatives. Once they submit their responses, they receive an e-mail with scores in six categories so they can see where their strengths and weaknesses are compared to other employers in the database.

“As an added bonus,” Mr. Noyce said, “we analyze the cumulative data from the Scorecard every year and publish a report showing which strategies are having the greatest impact on participation and outcomes.”

Now in its fourth year, the HERO Scorecard is beginning to reveal important trends in health management program strategy and design. Where health management programs once centered on managing chronic disease, best practice programs now also focus on *preventing* chronic disease by improving health habits. For example, the majority of Scorecard respondents – 70% – now conduct biometric screenings to alert employees to possible health risks, and offering personal coaching – by telephone, online, or face-to-face – has become one of the fastest-growing elements in health management programs. In addition, the use of financial incentives to drive employee participation in these programs is growing rapidly – and employers that use them are significantly more likely to report medical cost savings (76%) than those not offering incentives (46%).

Note for editors

The HERO Employee Health Management Best Practice Scorecard in Collaboration with Mercer is available to organizations on a complimentary basis and may be accessed through www.the-hero-org, www.mercer.com or a Scorecard Partner organization. The survey must be completed online, but a PDF version is available that can be used as a teaching tool or to prepare for completing the online version. After an organization’s information and data have been submitted to the online HERO Scorecard, they will receive a free report that compares the score of their program with the aggregate score of all the respondents.

To receive a copy of the HERO Scorecard 2012 Annual Report or to learn more about the Scorecard as a measurement tool for employers, visit www.the-hero-org and select the Scorecard link.

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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.

About Mercer

Mercer is a global consulting leader in talent, health, retirement and investments. Mercer helps clients around the world advance the health, wealth and performance of their most vital asset – their people. Mercer’s 19,000 employees are based in more than 40 countries. Mercer is a wholly owned subsidiary of Marsh & McLennan Companies (NYSE: MMC), a global team of professional services companies offering clients advice and solutions in the areas of risk, strategy and human capital. With 52,000 employees worldwide and annual revenue exceeding \$11 billion, Marsh & McLennan Companies is also the parent company of Marsh, a global leader in insurance broking and risk management; Guy Carpenter, a global leader in providing risk and reinsurance intermediary services; and Oliver Wyman, a global leader in management consulting. For more information, visit www.mercer.com. Follow Mercer on Twitter [@MercerInsights](https://twitter.com/MercerInsights).

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