



NEWS RELEASE

(For immediate release)

NEW HERO REPORT IDENTIFIES KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH COLLABORATION

National survey results reveal what business leaders look for when considering corporate involvement in efforts to improve community health

WACONIA, MN (November 16, 2017) — Employers in the United States are more likely to support efforts to improve community health when six key priorities are met. A new report from the Health Enhancement Research Organization's ([HERO](#)) Employer-Community Collaboration Committee identifies 20 health improvement-related priorities for businesses, and six factors business leaders look for as they consider lending corporate support to a community health initiative.

The report, "[Exploration into the Business Priorities Related to Corporate Engagement in Community Health Improvement Partnerships](#)," published in the November issue of the [Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine](#), identifies the following six things business leaders look for when deciding whether to support a community-health project (in order of importance):

- A credible convener
- Broad representation from the community
- A relatable mission or goals
- Individual commitment to health and wellness
- Organizational commitment to health and wellness
- Demonstrated commitment from collaboration leadership

"The United States spends [more](#) on health care than any other country, but dedicates [75 percent](#) of that spending to fighting preventable conditions, and just 4 percent to prevention. Business leaders recognize this problem and are looking for opportunities to make a difference in ways that also support their business priorities," said Karen Moseley, vice president of education at HERO and one of the authors of the report.

According to Moseley, a growing number of business leaders are investing in the health of their employees, but they also increasingly recognize the importance of engaging in efforts to create a culture of health in the communities they serve and to address concerns such as community access to health care and healthy food, emotional health issues, obesity, and graduation rates — all factors that contribute to community health.

The HERO report is based on interviews with business leaders across the country, facilitated group discussions with employers, and an online survey of business leaders. The report was designed to generate knowledge of how business leaders prioritize these factors and what influences their decisions about investing in community health.

Addressing health in the community is increasingly seen as important. By one measure, access to health care contributes no more than [16 percent](#) to overall health outcomes. Other factors, all tied to the community, make up the remaining more than 80 percent.

There are less tangible benefits, too. A Cone Communications [study](#) found that 90 percent of individuals have a more positive opinion of companies that work for the social good.

“We’ve seen evidence that the business sector is interested in engaging with the community to improve health,” Moseley said. “Understanding these priorities means community groups will be better able to tailor their message to engage employers in ways that benefit individuals and local businesses, while creating a culture of health in the broader community that supports their workplace well-being efforts.”

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has called creating a culture of health “[one of the most pervasive challenges of our time](#),” and there are compelling reasons for businesses to engage with community health. A 2014 [Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Communities](#) report from HERO showed that encouraging just 10 percent of adults to walk more would eliminate \$5.6 billion in heart disease costs. In addition, productivity losses related to personal and family health problems cost U.S. employers an estimated \$1,685 per employee, per year.

Through its Employer-Community Collaboration committee, HERO works to build a business case for engaging employers in community-wide health initiatives and creating a shared language and framework for such discussions. This work can be found online at www.get-hwhc.org.

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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 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](#) @heroehm or [LinkedIn](#).