

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 673

Recognizing the importance of workplace wellness as a strategy to help maximize employees' health and well being.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 22 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 17), 2008

Mr. HARKIN (for himself and Mr. SMITH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of workplace wellness as a strategy to help maximize employees' health and well being.

Whereas comprehensive, culturally sensitive health promotion within the workplace is essential to maintain and improve the health of American workers;

Whereas employees who improve their health also reduce their probability of chronic health conditions, lower their out-of-pocket medical and pharmaceutical costs, reduce pain and suffering, have greater levels of energy and vitality, and experience increased satisfaction with their lives and jobs;

Whereas health care costs in the United States doubled from 1990 to 2001 and are expected to double again by 2012;

Whereas employee health benefits are the fastest growing labor cost component for employers, thus posing a serious and growing challenge to business in the United States;

Whereas business leaders are struggling to find strategies to help reduce the direct costs of employer-provided health care, as well as the indirect costs associated with higher rates of absenteeism, disability, and injury;

Whereas an effective strategy to address the primary driving force of soaring health care costs requires an investment in prevention;

Whereas some employers who invest in health promotion and disease prevention have achieved rates of return on investment ranging from \$3 to \$15 for each dollar invested, as well as a 28 percent average reduction in sick leave absenteeism, an average 26 percent reduction in health care costs, and a 30 percent average reduction in workers' compensation and disability management claims costs;

Whereas the Healthy People 2010 national objectives for the United States include the workplace health-related goal that at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of United States employers, regardless of size, will voluntarily offer a comprehensive employee health promotion program that includes—(1) health education and programming which focuses on skill development and lifestyle behavior change along with information dissemination and awareness building, preferably tailored to employees' interests and needs; (2) supportive social and physical environments, including an organization's expectations regarding healthy behaviors, and implementation of policies that promote health and reduce risk of disease; (3) integration of the worksite wellness programs into the organization's structure; (4) linkage to

related programs like employee assistance programs (EAPs) and programs to help employees balance work and family; and (5) screening programs, ideally linked to medical care to ensure follow-up and appropriate treatment as necessary;

Whereas employers should be encouraged to invest in the health of employees by implementing comprehensive worksite health promotion programs that will help achieve our national Healthy People 2010 objectives;

Whereas business leaders that have made a healthy workforce a part of their core business strategy should be encouraged to share information and resources to educate their peers on the issue of employee health management through initiatives such as the Leading by Example CEO-to-CEO Roundtable on Workforce Health and the United States Workplace Wellness Alliance;

Whereas the employers that provide health care coverage for more than 177,000,000 Americans have the potential to exert transformative leadership on this issue by increasing the number, quality, and types of health promotion programs and policies at worksites across the Nation;

Whereas, for workplace wellness efforts to reach their full potential, chief executive officers of major corporations, company presidents of small enterprises, and State governors should be encouraged to make worksite health promotion a priority; and

Whereas Congress supports the National Worksite Health Promotion goal as stated in Healthy People 2010 and encourages public employers to increase their awareness of the value of corporate investments in employee health

management to help our Nation achieve this goal: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Senate calls on private and public
- 2 employers to support workplace wellness and implement
- 3 voluntarily worksite health promotion programs to help
- 4 maximize employees' health and well being and lower
- 5 health care costs.

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