

## U.S. WORKPLACE WELLNESS ALLIANCE



July 18, 2008

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gordon Smith  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Harkin and Smith:

The undersigned members of the U.S. Workplace Wellness Alliance, a broad-based, national organization of businesses, health care advocates, and nonprofit organizations dedicated to the vision that a healthier U.S. workforce produces a stronger and fiscally healthier U.S. economy, appreciate your leadership in developing S.1753, the “Healthy Workforce Act of 2007.” Your legislation seeks to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent chronic disease by providing tax credits to businesses that offer comprehensive employee wellness programs. This legislation would provide tax incentives to businesses that offer comprehensive worksite wellness programs to their employees.

Increasing numbers of employers hope to control rising health care costs by focusing on the health status of their employees. Research suggests that incorporating wellness, prevention and chronic disease management programs into traditional health plans can increase worker productivity, reduce absenteeism, and lower health insurance costs. Workplace wellness programs have achieved a rate of return on investment ranging from \$3 to \$15 for each dollar invested with savings realized within 12 to 18 months. Analyses have shown 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. Workplace wellness programs also benefit employers through recruitment, retention, and improved corporate image.

Benefits to society from healthier employees extend well beyond the workplace. These programs can play a major role in reducing health care costs, particularly when they are aimed at measures to reduce preventable but costly chronic diseases. Over 130 million Americans are employed across the United States and since a significant part of their day is spent at work, health promotion within the workplace is essential to maintain and improve the nation’s health.

We share your commitment to building the healthier workplace of tomorrow starting with the workplace of today. We appreciate your efforts to assist businesses – particularly small and mid-sized companies – with the incentives and tools they need to create a healthy workplace. This legislation is an acknowledgement of the important

role employers can play in promoting healthier lifestyles and creating a more productive American workforce. We commend your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you and your colleagues to advance the goal of promoting comprehensive wellness, preventive, and chronic disease management programs in the American workplace.

Sincerely,

Aetna  
AARP  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Heart Association  
American Stroke Association  
BlueCross BlueShield Association (BCBSA)  
Buffalo Supply, Inc.  
CIGNA Corporation  
Con-way Inc.  
Deere & Company  
Fox Entertainment Group, Inc.  
HCA  
GlaxoSmithKline  
IBM  
Ingram Industries Inc.  
Hepatitis Foundation International  
L &T Health and Fitness  
Maritz Inc.  
National Association of Health Underwriters  
National Retail Federation  
NAVISTAR, Inc.  
Partnership for Prevention  
Pfizer Inc  
Prescient Solutions  
Pyramid Services, Inc.  
Research!America  
Rockwell Automation, Inc.  
Rockwell Collins, Inc.  
Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)  
Sensei, Inc.  
State of Indiana  
The Dow Chemical Company  
The WorkCare Group, Inc.  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
UPS