U.S. Workplace Wellness Alliance

1015 18TH ST., NW, SUITE 300
WASHINGTON, DC 20036
(202) 833-0009
FAX (202) 833-0113
HTTP://WWW.USWWA.ORG

December 17, 2009

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
United States Senate
Room 513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Carper:

The U.S. Workplace Wellness Alliance ("Alliance") strongly supports your efforts to increase support for employer-site worksite wellness programs. We are 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. The Alliance applauds the introduction of Senate Amendment (S.A.) 2891, "Workplace Wellness Grants for Small Businesses" and urges its adoption. If this amendment was included in "The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act", this provision would represent an important step towards increasing the availability and access to workplace wellness programs.

The rising cost of health care poses a serious threat to the competitiveness of U.S. business and to our nation's economy. Nearly 60% of employers' after-tax profits are spent on corporate health benefits compared to 7% just three decades ago. Worksite wellness programs among large businesses have been shown to be an effective way to reverse this trend and bring down health care costs in tangible ways for both employers and employees.

A new grant program at the Department of Health and Human Services targeted at small businesses will help promote employer investment in evidence-based strategies for improving the health of workers by addressing causes of chronic disease. Employer wellness programs are a win-win for both the employee and the employer. Healthy employees are more productive because they are absent less often, and are more focused on their tasks. Worksite wellness programs can reduce sick leave absenteeism by an average of 28 percent.

We look forward to working with your office to support the inclusion of the Amendment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

U.S. Workplace Wellness Alliance Steering Committee

Sincerely,

-American College of Preventive Medicine
-American Heart Association
-American Hospital Association
-The Dow Chemical Company
National Business Coalition on Health
-Partnership for Prevention
-UPS
-U.S. Chamber of Commerce