

March 11, 2008

Alderman Michael Murphy, Chairman
City of Milwaukee Common Council Finance and Personnel Committee
200 East Wells Street, Room 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202

City of Milwaukee Wellness Promotion Update

Dear Alderman Murphy:

The City of Milwaukee initiated Wellness Promotion activity in 2007. Each Department Head has identified a “team leader” and team members for the Wellness Promotion activity who were provided with training through the Wellness Council of America – Wisconsin. The team leaders have been meeting monthly since August 2007.

In addition to making good business sense to the City there are numerous advantages to the individuals and the departments.

Mr. Robert Schweitzer of the Health Department and Michael Brady of Department of Employee Relations are the key City leaders.

The complementary Well City effort in cooperation with the MMAC, GMC, YMCA, Wellness Council and over 42 public and private employers has passed the one-year mark on a three-year effort. The goal is to have over 20% of employers and 20% of their employees participating in wellness programs by the end of 2009.

The Wellness Promotion has included a variety of activity from different departments: healthy eating, noon-time walks, ice-skating, bike riding, classes on healthy foods, wellness newsletters, stress reduction classes, weight loss competition, yoga classes, education about heart disease and cancer, just to mention a few.

In the coming months additional activities focusing on awareness, education and support of behavior change will be taking place. These will include additional classes or training, encouragement of the use of the www.myuhc.com web site for a voluntary health risk analysis, and voluntary health risk screenings to promote a “know your numbers” to all employees around cholesterol, heart risk, blood pressure, body fat and BMI. Already over 1000 employees have signed onto the www.myuhc.com site.

The MPA and Local 215 labor contracts will include financial incentives for employees in 2009 to be smoke free and to have a health risk assessment. When additional labor negotiations are concluded the specifics of this Wellness activity will become clear.

I look forward to your questions and comments at the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting.

Sincerely,
Michael Brady
Employee Benefits

CC: Maria Monteagudo, DER
Troy Hamblin, DER
Bevan Baker, Health Department