Are Healthy Workplaces More Productive?

Friday, June 6, 2003 – Are healthy workplaces more productive? It would certainly be hard to argue the converse.

Intuitively, there have to be benefits from ensuring a healthy workforce and a healthy workplace. But, as with all population health matters, it isn't so easy to quantify the impact on output of a dollar spent on improving working conditions. Nor is it easy to determine how much of the benefit accrues to the employer, to the individual, and to society as a whole. And that, of course, raises the question of who should be responsible for ensuring a healthy workplace.

In a recent report prepared for Health Canada, Work Network Research Associate, Graham Lowe, explores the relationship between workplace health and productivity. He tackles two questions from an interdisciplinary perspective:

- What work environment and organizational factors improve workers' health and well-being?
- Are organizations that promote good health for their employees more productive?

Lowe's message for employers: workplace wellness programs can yield cost savings and productivity payoffs.

But he also points to the public policy interest in workplace health. Healthy work environments contribute to the well-being of workers and to economic performance. They also reduce the overall costs of both public and private health care. Lowe concludes that governments must treat health, employment and economic issues as related policy spheres.

You can access or download a copy of Lowe's paper, ***Healthy Workplaces and Productivity: A Discussion Paper***, from our Web site.

For plenty of other interesting related material (all downloadable), and a weblog on high quality work that is updated daily, visit the Web site of The Graham Lowe Group at www.grahamlowe.ca

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