Healthy Workplaces: Good for Workers, Good for the Economy

Friday, August 29, 2003 – It makes sense that a workplace workers regard as unhealthy affects their morale and commitment to the job. The consequences are costly. There are more days lost to absenteeism. Turnover is higher, as employees seek to improve their work experience.

So what do employees look for in a healthy work environment, and what difference does it make?

That's the focus of a recent study by Grant Schellenberg, former Director of CPRN's Work Network, Graham Lowe of the Graham Lowe Group and CPRN Research Associate, and Harry Shannon, Director of McMaster University's Program in Occupational Health and Environmental Medicine. The study, published in the July/August issue of the *American Journal of Health Promotion*, is based on a nationally representative sample of 2,500 employed Canadians.

The data show that good employment relationships are strongly correlated with what workers perceive to be a healthy workplace. The authors find that a work environment characterized by good communication and social support, for example, is more likely to be regarded as healthy by workers.

Employees who see their workplace as healthy express higher job satisfaction, a stronger commitment to their employer, display higher morale and lower absenteeism rates, and are less likely to have looked for another job in the past twelve months.

The study points to the need for a comprehensive approach to workplace health that targets working conditions, work relationships and workplace organization for health promotion.

You can access or download a copy of the paper, ***Correlates of Employees' Perceptions of a Healthy Work Environment***, by clicking here.

For additional reading in a similar vein, visit the Web site of the Graham Lowe Group at www.grahamlowe.ca

The Web site of the *American Journal of Health Promotion* is www.healthpromotionjournal.com

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