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**AS POPULARITY OF CORPORATE WELLNESS PROGRAMS INCREASES, VALUE OF  
CARING WORKPLACE PROGRAM IS CLEAR**

**ST. LOUIS, MO., May. x, 2010...** As companies continue to recover from the economic downturn and struggle to keep healthcare costs down while keeping employee morale and productivity up, many are implementing corporate wellness programs. According to a February 2009 study by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), 50 percent of SHRM's members noted that they had established wellness programs, with an additional five percent of members stating they planned to offer them in the future. From weight loss and smoking cessation programs to exercise classes and health fairs, wellness programs are designed to improve the physical and mental health of employees, and in the St. Louis area, the *Caring Workplace* program is helping to ensure that working caregivers also get the wellness support they need.

By promoting healthier work environments, employers are aiming to reduce absenteeism, and help employees feel more energetic, less stressed and more productive overall. Since the workforce is healthier and happier, the company's bottom line also benefits from increased productivity and seemingly lower health care costs because wellness programs are designed to help employees become more responsible and proactive with their health. Many companies also view wellness programs as means of recruiting and maintaining valuable employees.

Since its inception in 2003, the St. Andrew's *Caring Workplace* program has been helping companies avail of many of the same benefits that those offering other types of corporate wellness programs are currently enjoying.

"Statistics indicate that \$33.6 billion is lost in corporate America every year due to the lower productivity, decreased performance and overall decrease in quality of life that can result from the stress and health concerns experienced by working caregivers," said Ann Bannes, vice president of St. Andrew's Senior Solutions. "Unfortunately, caregiver support is not often top of mind when most companies consider corporate wellness programs. But with the aging population skyrocketing, and more and more individuals being thrust into caregiving roles, support for caregivers is proving to be an invaluable resource for both the caregiver and the company in which they're employed."

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## **Caring Workplace serves as valuable corporate wellness resource**

### **First and final add**

The *Caring Workplace* program is focused on helping working individuals who are also providing care for an older loved one to get the support they need to better balance their work and caregiving responsibilities. It offers on-site caregiver assessments, face-to-face consultations, counseling and support, and links to a wide range of community resources, as well as lunch and learns and educational information on an array of eldercare topics. Currently, [REDACTED] companies in the St. Louis area are offering the *Caring Workplace* program to their employees.

“In terms of corporate wellness, the companies that have embraced the *Caring Workplace* are really ahead of the curve because they’ve had the foresight to begin addressing the issues surrounding caregivers in the workplace,” noted Bannes. “As a result, their organizations are seeing a positive impact on their bottom lines because the services their employees are receiving are enhancing the quality of their lives, and in turn, making them healthier, more motivated and productive. As increasing numbers of employers begin to see how their own employees are being affected by caregiving issues, I think we are likely to see many more companies begin to include caregiver services in their corporate wellness strategies.”

In today’s tough economy, caregiver support programs are proving to be especially valuable, as outlined in a recent study by Pfizer which indicated that funds spent on caregiving have a payback to the employer of 2.5 to five times the cost. Companies offering the *Caring Workplace* have praised the program’s ability to help build employee morale and the role it’s played in helping them retain talented staff members and avoid the high costs associated with replacement, retraining, workday interruptions, unpaid leave and reductions in hours worked due to eldercare responsibilities.

“With caregiving responsibilities having such a profound effect on an individual’s overall health, programs to address caregiver needs are a critical piece of the corporate wellness puzzle, and St. Andrew’s is proud to be a leader in addressing the needs of employed caregivers in the St. Louis area,” said Bannes.

To learn more about the *Caring Workplace* and the companies that are currently offering the program, or for information on how area employers can begin offering this service to their employees, call (314) 726-5766 or log on to [www.caringworkplace.com](http://www.caringworkplace.com).

*St. Andrew’s Senior Solutions is a private, non-profit organization that is an affiliate of the St. Andrew’s Resources for Seniors System. Founded in 1961, the St. Andrew’s Resources for Seniors System is not-for-profit and provides housing, health, in-home care and supportive services, as well as services and assistance to the family caregivers of seniors.*

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