



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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January 20, 2006

TO: Mary Selecky, Secretary, Department of Health
Steve Hill, Administrator, Health Care Authority

FROM: Governor Christine Gregoire

SUBJECT: Employee Wellness

The overall health and fitness of Washington citizens, including state employees and retirees, is important to the state's productivity, collective health, and quality of life. Unfortunately, we continue to witness national and state trends that demonstrate a significant decline in healthy lifestyles. These include decreased physical activity, increased consumption of unhealthy foods, continued smoking, and inadequate reliance on screening and early detection tools.

Government must play a leadership role in promoting prevention and wellness. I believe Washington State is especially well-suited to serving as a model, promoting healthy behavior among our own employees and retirees. In so doing, we not only improve the health of state employees and retirees, themselves, but also enhance their ability to serve state citizens.

With the goal of using the state to promote good health, I am directing the Health Care Authority and the Department of Health to work with other state agencies to launch *Washington Wellness Works*, a statewide wellness initiative to improve the health of Washington State employees and retirees.

To further the work of this initiative, I am directing the two of you to create and co-chair a Washington State Employee Health & Productivity Committee. This Committee will consist of 12 members, appointed by me, and will include labor union and classified employee representation.

Mary Selecky
Steve Hill
January 19, 2006
Page 2

I am charging the Washington State Employee Health & Productivity Committee to identify community partnerships and state agency resources to:

- Implement wellness programs for state employees, retirees, and their families based on public and private sector best practices;
- Identify models and opportunities for on-site wellness initiatives;
- Encourage the use of a health risk assessment, coordinate wellness fairs and activities, and encourage appropriate health screenings for state employees;
- Coordinate the communication of wellness initiatives and provide feedback to state agencies; and
- Develop measures to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs, including both improvements in health and return on investment. Measures will be included in the Government Management, Accountability, and Performance Program (GMAP) for tracking, as appropriate.

I am further directing each state agency to offer its expertise and cooperation to educate all state employees on healthy lifestyle and fitness models, and to identify a “Wellness Coordinator” to spearhead that agency’s efforts and serve as the agency’s liaison to the Washington State Employee Health & Productivity Committee.

I encourage all state employees and retirees to participate in a personal health care assessment, participate in health and fitness programs, and track their individual progress. Additionally, I invite institutions of higher education, public schools, statewide elected officials, boards, commissions, and others to implement the practices herein described within their agencies.