



Kentucky Personnel Cabinet
Office of the Secretary

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**Commonwealth of Kentucky joins Virgin HealthMiles and the STOP
Obesity Alliance to promote healthier work places as part of
National Employee Wellness Month**

Gov. Beshear kicks off the Commonwealth's Journey to Wellness employee Weight Wise competition

FRANKFORT, KY (September 1, 2009) –Gov. Steve Beshear today announced that the Commonwealth is participating in the first annual National Employee Wellness Month. This month-long initiative will help raise awareness about the benefits of workplace wellness and will educate business leaders and employees about steps they can take to create healthier and more physically active workplaces. In total, more than 60 companies across the United States are participating in the initiative.

“We all know the Commonwealth’s national ranking in obesity, wellness and heart disease is not what it should be, so we must encourage greater physical activity and more healthful choices on the part of all Kentuckians,” said Gov. Beshear. “The workplace has the potential to serve as a critical change-agent for helping employees become more physically active together and we are pleased to be a public partner in this initiative.”

The Commonwealth is celebrating National Employee Wellness Month with a two-pronged initiative. First, the Commonwealth and Virgin HealthMiles are offering a special physical challenge, where Virgin HealthMiles participants will be able to enroll and compete in a nationwide steps competition. Second, the Commonwealth is kicking off the third phase of Journey to Wellness, with a Weight Wise challenge.

Weight Wise is a 12-week program in which all state employees can participate via the Internet or in small teams at work to compete to see which team can lose the highest percentage of weight. This program will also assist employees to reach sensible weight-

loss goals by adopting a lifestyle that supports healthier eating habits and physical activity. Journey to Wellness will have prizes for the winning teams and the individual who loses the most pounds.

The Journey to Wellness is designed to be a strategic and comprehensive approach to wellness for all Commonwealth employees. The program provides engaging, educational and fun wellness activities and programs that assist employees with their greatest health needs.

Journey to Wellness began its first year in 2009 with four phases including a “know your numbers” screening campaign and a fitness challenge, which ended in July. Following the Weight Wise challenge, the fourth phase will focus on prevention awareness. The Journey to Wellness program also incorporates services including: the Humana health assessment, health coaching services, smoking cessation and the Active Health disease management program.

“Initiatives like National Employee Wellness Month and our own Journey to Wellness allow us to take a proactive approach toward wellness,” says Personnel Cabinet Secretary Nikki Jackson. “Our mission is to provide a positive, supportive work environment for our employees and to become an employer of choice. Employees are happier and more productive when they’re healthy.”

Increased physical activity has been proven to help prevent the onset of obesity and related chronic diseases that account for 75 percent or \$1.5 trillion of our nation’s healthcare costs, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To learn about the Commonwealth’s Journey to Wellness, go to www.personnel.ky.gov. For more information about National Employee Wellness Month, visit www.nationalemployeewellnessmonth.com. Also, check out Virgin Healthmiles www.virginhealthmiles.com and Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance at www.stopobesityalliance.org.

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