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### **TOBACCO-FREE TOOLKIT HELPS BUSINESSES INCREASE THEIR BOTTOM LINES**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., March 10, 2009** - Businesses looking for ways to rescue their bottom lines and protect the health of their employees and their families can pick up some valuable tips from a new “toolkit” that shows them how to lower their costs by reducing the use of tobacco in the workplace through personal behavior change, health benefit design, and sensible workplace policies.

The kit, entitled “Investing in A Tobacco-Free Future: How it Benefits Your Bottom Line & Community,” was produced by Partnership for Prevention and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, with funding from the United Health Foundation. It is being mailed this week to every FORTUNE 500 company in America, and it can be accessed online at [www.prevent.org/tobaccofreefuture](http://www.prevent.org/tobaccofreefuture).

Smoking-related illness results in almost \$100 billion in health care costs each year, while smokers on average are absent from work seven to 10 more days per year than non-smokers. As the toolkit points out, businesses also incur sizable tobacco-related costs not related to health. Commercial cigarette fires cause about \$500 million in damages and kill 2,000 people each year, while cleaning costs associated with smoking in the workplace total about \$4 billion per year.

“Businesses can benefit by understanding the serious impact of tobacco and, by implementing programs and policies to help create a healthier community, they can achieve serious gains for maximum return,” said Corrine G. Husten, MD, MPH, Partnership for Prevention’s interim president.

The toolkit shows employers how they can support tobacco control “inside the walls” of their businesses by establishing a model workplace tobacco control program. The model program includes a set of policies, benefits and programs that will encourage employees not to use tobacco in the workplace and to quit using tobacco altogether.

It also lays out how businesses can support efforts beyond their own walls to reduce tobacco use and improve health in the larger community, where employees and their families live, work and play.

“While workplace initiatives can be very effective in improving health, these efforts will have an even bigger impact if employees and their families live in healthy communities,” said Matthew Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. “By getting involved in state and community efforts to reduce tobacco use, businesses can make an even bigger difference in the health of their employees and the cost of their health care.”

“All Americans should be concerned by the persistent reports that more than 20% of the population continues to smoke tobacco,” said Reed V. Tuckson, MD, United Health Foundation board member and executive vice president and chief of medical affairs, UnitedHealth Group. “Employers have a special opportunity and incentive to positively influence the behavior of their employees and to become strong advocates in public policy discussions in their communities to control tobacco abuse and its devastating health consequences.”

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#### ***ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS:***

##### **About Partnership for Prevention**

*Partnership for Prevention is a non-partisan, non-profit organization of business, health care and government leaders seeking to make disease prevention and health promotion a national priority in health policies and practices. For more information, go online to [www.prevent.org](http://www.prevent.org).*

##### **About The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids**

*The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is a leader in the fight to reduce tobacco use and its devastating consequences in the United States and around the world. By changing public attitudes and public policies on tobacco, the Campaign works to prevent kids from smoking, help smokers quit and protect everyone from secondhand smoke.*

##### **About the United Health Foundation**

*Guided by a passion to help people live healthier lives, United Health Foundation supports activities that expand access to quality health care services for those in challenging circumstances and partners with others to improve the well being of communities. The Foundation also provides helpful information to support decisions that lead to better health outcomes and healthier communities. Since established by UnitedHealth Group [NYSE: UNH] in 1999 as a not for profit private foundation, the Foundation has committed more than \$160 million to improve health and health care. For more information, visit [www.unitedhealthfoundation.org](http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org).*