



NEWS RELEASE
4/28/09

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**Alere's Dr. Michael Taitel Provides Insights Into
Reducing Health and Productivity Costs During Turbulent Economic Times**

- Taitel to speak at Annual SALGBA meeting in Denver
- Highlights include the critical relationship between health and productivity and methods for measuring the cost of poor health to employers
- Underscores how stressful economic environment impacts personal health
- Insights into how to help employees better cope in today's environment

Marietta, GA – April 28, 2009 – With the ongoing slumping economy, many employees are experiencing increased stress and decreased health and productivity. To make matters worse, poor employee health is also adding to employers' healthcare expenditures. Michael Taitel, Ph.D., vice president of the Alere Center for Health Intelligence at Alere LLC, a leader in personal health support solutions, will provide insights about how employers can help their employees better manage stress, while increasing productivity and decreasing employee benefit expenditures at the State and Local Governments Benefits Association (SALGBA) Annual Meeting in Denver on April 29.

"Many organizations today are searching for ways to reduce expenditures," noted Taitel. "Employees are an organization's most valuable asset; however, lost employee productivity can add to an organization's financial burden. At Alere, our goal is to show employers how to help employees cope and remain productive even during tough economic times."

Taitel notes that employees today face struggles not seen for decades. A recent AARP survey noted that 20% of people 45 and older reported health problems due to financial stress yet 22% have delayed seeing a doctor due to cost.¹

Employers are also noting the effects of today's stress on employees. A survey by AXA PPP Healthcare found that 25% of HR executives believe the majority of its employees showed symptoms of stress as a result of money worries. A surprising 75% of HR execs felt employees would be more productive if they were less concerned about financial issues.²

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Studies also show that there have been increases in prescriptions for anti-anxiety drugs, anti-depressants and sleep aids and decreases in spending for drugs to treat chronic illnesses – a trend that concerns healthcare providers as it could lead to further decreases in productivity and increases in other healthcare costs.

“Fear and stress are leading to increases in risky health behaviors,” notes Taitel. “This is an important issue for employers to address as stress can exacerbate existing conditions and cause new illnesses to emerge. If employers don’t take steps to intervene and help their employees, they can expect a rebound in utilization and increased healthcare costs.”

Taitel and his colleagues at Alere believe simple programs that provide incentives as well as personal health support by employers can help improve health and productivity and manage the stress of today’s worker. He recommends employers:

- Obtain data to understand their organization’s cost drivers. For example,
 - Chronic conditions
 - Health risks
 - Medical and pharmacy costs
 - Productivity costs
- Enlist executive management support.
- Complete an assessment of the organization’s culture and readiness to implement a health & productivity program.
- Understand the organization’s communication preferences, including frequency and medium.
- Develop measurable goals.
- Choose a health & productivity assessment (HPA) tool to measure results.

For a copy of Taitel’s SALGBA presentation or additional information, please contact Alere at alereinfo@alere.com.

About Alere

Alere(www.alere.com) is a member of the Inverness Medical Innovations (www.invernessmedical.com) family of companies and represents the union of Alere Medical, ParadigmHealth and Matria Healthcare. Alere, a Latin verb, meaning “to care for” or “to support”, offers the most patient-centered health management services available from a single provider in the industry. Alere® services provide health interventions that are designed for the entire lifespan from pre-cradle (high-risk pregnancy and NICU management) to end-of-life care (complex care) as well as the continuum of health from wellness (health and productivity programs) and prevention to total health management of the individual for those having various chronic illnesses.

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Sources

¹ Health Care Costs and Financing: Impact of the Economy on Health Behaviors Research Report, Teresa A. Keenan, Ph.D., AARP Knowledge Management, November 2008. Accessed 4/29/09 http://www.aarp.org/research/health/carefinancing/healthcosts_08.html.

² Paton N. Economic downturn continues to put employee health at risk. *Occupational Health*. 2008;16:23. Accessed 4/29/09 <http://www.personneltoday.com/articles/2008/11/17/48450/economic-downturn-continues-to-put-employee-health-at-risk.html>.