

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 30, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #98: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CHANGES BEING CONSIDERED FOR THE CITY'S EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

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This memo is in response to Mayor Euille and Vice Mayor Donley's request for information on the City's Wellness Program. The employees have participated on a voluntary basis and many of the program's offerings have been free or significantly discounted. The program is administered through an eight-member standing Wellness committee that is comprised of representatives from ten departments and variety of job classes. Currently the program provides a variety of wellness opportunities for employees, examples of which include: offering flu shots, free use of City recreation facilities and an annual Health Fair where employees can receive health screenings and information on health behaviors and choices.

In February 2010, Human Resources contracted with Buck Consultants (a health care consultant firm with whom the City has a long tenured relationship with) to assist in the development of a cost effective and efficient Wellness Program for City employees.

The mission of the future program will be to provide employees with wellness opportunities to enhance their overall health and well being. The goals of the program as collectively developed between HR and Buck are to:

- Increase awareness of employee health risks
- Motivate employees to improve their lifestyle and overall health status
- Build a "healthy" culture among City employees
- Decrease health plan cost

Buck has proposed a two Phase approach to the development of a viable Wellness Program:

**Phase I** – Assess the needs of the City's employees by understanding multiple factors: the current health care environment; populations demographics; current and projected costs associated with risky health behaviors; chronic disease prevalence; as well as employee/employer relationships. Analyze the City's current health management program and organizational philosophy as well as develop attainable goals for a focused Wellness Program that achieves the City of Alexandria's objectives and population needs.

**Phase II** – Planning and management of a vendor search as well as implementation of a Wellness Program for City employees. This phase includes assisting the City in techniques on monitoring of direct clinical and financial impact of the program.

In Phase I, Buck has requested and received information and data from Human Resources and the City's Health Care providers (Kaiser-Permanente and United Healthcare), Workers Compensation claims and information on previous city wellness initiatives.

At this time, HR is working with Buck to create a formal plan for a Citywide Wellness program by identifying "Best in Class" program components and formulating recommendations for short and long term goals for the City's program.

As work with Buck consultant is moving at a deliberate pace, HR staff anticipates being able to present a fully developed proposal for a city-wide Wellness Program to City Council at a meeting prior to the summer recess.