



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

Office of the
Director

February 27, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: Linda M. Springer,
Director

SUBJECT: *HealthierFeds*: Promoting Wellness Among Federal Employees Heart
Health Month, February 2006

The American Heart Association estimates that in 2005, direct and indirect costs of cardiovascular disease totaled a staggering \$393.5 billion. The Federal Government is involved in many aspects of addressing this burden – in research, public health education, and other activities that serve the American public. As the nation's largest employer, we have a responsibility to reach out to employees and their families through the workplace. We are well positioned to facilitate positive change in employee health and wellbeing and reduce the costs heart disease imposes on our country.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies heart disease as the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States, yet:

- Studies among people with heart disease have shown that lowering high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure can reduce the risk of dying of heart disease, having a nonfatal heart attack, and needing heart bypass surgery or angioplasty.
- Studies among people without heart disease have shown that lowering high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure can reduce the risk of developing heart disease.

Workplace programs are a key component in mitigating the lifestyle choices responsible for some of the leading risk factors for heart disease. Sedentary lifestyle, smoking, poor nutritional choices, and a lack of understanding of prevention and healthy practices lead to overweight and obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Many of these can be addressed in the workplace by making information, facilities, and resources easily available, and by encouraging employees to take advantage of these services.

OPM's *HealthierFeds* initiative provides support and assistance to Federal agency workplace wellness programs. Staff members at OPM are available to consult with agency program managers and can be contacted at HealthierFeds@opm.gov. Further information is also available on the *HealthierFeds* website, healthierfeds.gov.

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National observances, such as February's Heart Health Month, provide an ideal opportunity to disseminate positive health messages and low or no cost materials and information in the workplace. See the American Heart Association's website at americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200009 for information about healthy lifestyle choices that can lead to better heart health.

cc: Human Resources Directors