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Contact:

Eric Nielsen
(202) 715-3030
Eric_nielsen@gallup.com

Melissa Gibbs
(615) 565-5957
melissa.gibbs@healthways.com

National Well-Being Measure Finds Majority Struggling

Data confirm illness and negative work environment have significant impact on productivity

WASHINGTON, D.C. April 29, 2008 – Most Americans are struggling to achieve satisfactory health and well-being according to initial results of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index announced today. When asked to evaluate their lives based on a ladder scale, 47 percent of the 100,000 respondents polled in the 1,000 daily surveys conducted since January say they are struggling and an additional four percent say they are suffering. Factors contributing to these findings include negative workplace environments and difficulty making positive health decisions about modifiable health behaviors like diet, exercise, and stress.

“In general, we find that misfortunes tend to reinforce each other,” said Daniel Kahneman, Ph. D., Professor Emeritus at Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson School Senior Scholar, Eugene Higgins Professor of Psychology and Nobel Laureate, Economics 2002. “In addition to physical pain, illness also increases feelings of stress, sadness and worries about money, and lowers energy. These consequences of illness are buffered or mitigated to some extent by the availability of health insurance, by higher income, by being married and by social contact with others. We are discovering that different aspects of life determine people’s judgments and their emotions, and we expect this survey to provide a much richer picture of the feelings of the American citizenry than has ever been available”

The Well-Being Index data also have tremendous implications for the American workplace and reveal that workers believe their work environment plays an important part in their overall well-being. Among the nearly 46,000 full-time workers surveyed to date:

- Nearly two-thirds are obese or overweight (25 percent obese, 40 percent overweight)
- Two-thirds report one or more chronic diseases or recurring conditions
- More than 20 percent report they are not able to perform their usual activities on one or more days last month due to illness. These workers reported being out sick an average of six days in the last 30
- Workers with one to three diseases and/or conditions report they cannot carry out their usual activities on 13.5 days each year. The impact of a negative work environment is an additional 6.6 days (48% higher) annually. Workers with four or more disease conditions report they cannot carry out their usual activities on 52.7 days each year. For these workers, the presence of a negative work environment increases that total to 68.9 days (a 31% increase)

"It's pretty clear from the data provided through the Well-Being Index that Americans are indeed stuck in a cycle of chronic disease. We see that the majority of America is currently struggling or suffering and that they often make poor lifestyle choices. Many are stressed, worried and overweight, all factors which lead to illness and, ultimately, lifelong health conditions," said Healthways President and CEO Ben Leedle. "The information from the Well-Being Index will enable community leaders, policy makers and employers to make decisions that positively affect the health and well-being of millions of people."

Based on the World Health Organization's definition of health, the initial findings of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index were unveiled at a press conference at Gallup's Washington, D.C. office. Speaking before an invited group of leaders from health, business and government, Gallup Chairman and CEO Jim Clifton described how the Well-Being Index will help countries, states and communities benchmark their health and well-being status.

"We have committed to conducting the Gallup World Poll for the next 100 years. We consider the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index to be of equal importance. In this new Index, the health domain reports physical and mental health, the well-being domain reports the presence of suffering or thriving, misery or inspiration, feeling controlled or feeling independent. This is a crucial metric because all good things happen in the presence of high well-being," said Gallup Chairman and CEO Jim Clifton. "Our mission is to create new official statistics for leaders and the public that report the daily state of American health and well-being and to develop solutions to change and improve it."

"The power of the approach used in the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is in its size and scope," said Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Surveys and studies that get information from large numbers of people have the potential to provide much information that can be used to shape and deliver programs that improve health. Having a daily snapshot of how Americans view their own health and well-being can also provide insights that can help guide public health policies."

About the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is the first and largest survey of its kind, with 1,000 calls a day, seven days a week. It is designed to be the Dow Jones of health, giving a daily measure of people's well-being at the close of every day based on the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health as "not only the absence of infirmity and disease but also a state of physical, mental and social well-being." The Well-Being Index will be a daily measure determining the correlation between the places where people work and the communities in which they live, and how that and other factors impact their well-being. Additionally, The Well-Being Index will increase the understanding of how those factors impact the financial health of corporations and communities. For additional information, go to www.well-beingindex.com.

About Healthways

Healthways (Nasdaq: HWAY) is the leading provider of specialized, comprehensive Health and Care Support(SM) solutions to help millions of people maintain or improve their health and, as a result, reduce overall healthcare costs. Healthways' solutions are designed to help healthy individuals stay healthy, mitigate and slow the progression of disease associated with family or lifestyle risk factors and promote the best possible health for those already affected by disease. Our proven, evidence-based programs provide highly specific and personalized interventions for each individual in a population, irrespective of age or health status, and are delivered to consumers by phone, mail, internet and face-to-face interactions, both domestically and internationally. Healthways also provides a national, fully accredited complementary and alternative Health Provider Network, offering convenient access to individuals who seek health services outside of, and in conjunction with, the traditional healthcare system. For more information, please visit www.healthways.com.

About Gallup

Gallup has studied human nature and behavior for more than 70 years. Gallup's reputation for delivering relevant, timely, and visionary research on what people around the world think and feel is the cornerstone of the organization. Gallup employs many of the world's leading scientists in management, economics, psychology, and sociology, and our consultants assist leaders in identifying and monitoring behavioral economic indicators worldwide. Gallup consultants also help organizations boost organic growth by increasing customer engagement and maximizing employee productivity through measurement tools, coursework, and strategic advisory services. Gallup's 2,000 professionals deliver services at client organizations, through the Web, at Gallup University's campuses, and in 40 offices around the world. For more information, go to www.gallup.com.