



Press Release

For immediate release

A World Première! A Completely New Standard “Healthy Enterprise”

Quebec, February 25, 2008 – The Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ) and the Group for Promotion of Prevention Strategies (GP²S) were very proud to present the world première of the new standard aiming to sustainably improve the health of people in the workplace. This standard, known and distributed under the name “Healthy Enterprise” has been officially called *Prevention, Promotion and Organizational Practices for Health in the Workplace* [BNQ 9700-800].

This initiative of the GP²S was used by the BNQ to develop this new standard for companies to integrate a set of actions into their management processes that promote good habits and an optimal working environment. In concrete terms, this standard focuses on four areas recognized for having a significant impact on employee health: habits, work-personal life balance, working environment and management practices.

It is now a well-known and documented fact: bad habits (poor diet, sedentary lifestyle, smoking, etc.), high levels of stress or an unhealthy working environment affect the chances of remaining healthy and, in turn, reduces the governments’ room to manoeuvre given the enormous costs to the healthcare system.

“The only way we can collectively avoid having the healthcare system eat up government budgets,” explained Roger Bertrand, Chair of the Board of Directors of GP²S, “is to convince people in general to change their habits. Given that people spend more than half their waking hours at work, it only seems logical that we not only talk about health in the workplace, but also offer programs that will promote the adoption of better habits and a healthier working environment. This way, we will not only be able to keep them away from the hospital, but also make them happier and more productive in their personal and professional lives.”

A certification program offered by the BNQ, in partnership with the GP²S, will be offered in the spring of 2008. This certification will recognize companies that have incorporated actions into their management practices that promote the health of the people as specified in the “Healthy Enterprise” standard.

“Today, young people place great importance on health and the balance between work and personal life,” asserts Jacques Girard, BNQ Director. “And, at the same time, companies are constantly looking to improve their activities in order to make major gains in productivity. What we are proposing with this standard is to set up an effective continuous improvement program for the health of their employees, and watch their rates of productivity increase. The numbers speak for themselves, since recent studies conducted by the GP²S have shown that each dollar invested in these programs brings a return of \$1.50 to \$3 in increased productivity over the first five years after these programs have been implemented. This is huge! Therefore, it is beneficial for companies to include the health of their employees as part of their standard practices and publicly advertise their “Healthy Enterprise” certification.”

About...

It is important to remember that the **Group for Promotion of Prevention Strategies (GP²S)** is a group of companies that is dedicated to the promotion of health and the prevention of disease in the workplace. Originally supported by the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon, it now has the backing of 115 companies and member organizations, including two governor members, the Mouvement Desjardins and Alcoa Canada. For more information go to: www.gp2s.net

The **Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ)** is an organization for standardization, certification and distribution of information on standards, and is officially recognized by the Government of Québec, the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). For more information go to: www.bnq.qc.ca

-30-

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