A 2015 survey led by some colleagues at the HERO Think Tank found that only 1 in 5 corporate leaders listed health and wellbeing as a top driver of business performance. To me, that meant that 4 of 5 corporate leaders are missing a huge opportunity to improve their organizational performance!

This month, I hope that starts to change. Three new studies were published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine that make a compelling case for senior leaders. The three studies found that public companies that rated highly on three different standards of excellence for wellness dramatically outperformed the stock market as a whole.

The three standards of excellence in corporate health are:

- The Corporate Health Achievement Award (CHAA)
- The C. Everett Koop National Health Awards
- The HERO Best Practices Scorecard

These three standards have some differences in perspective, but they have much more in common. They all help us understand the elements of a healthy, safe and supportive culture. And now these JOEM studies quantify in a big way the financial benefits associated with companies that have done a great job of building such cultures!

I learned the hard way in my own journey in the field of corporate health that even the most effective HRA’s, biometric screenings and interventions could hardly move the needle if the work environment did not support healthy behavior. In other words, there’s not much use in offering weight management classes if the company is still supplying soft drinks and doughnuts for meetings and pizzas for the working lunches. Now “culture-building” is our primary focus!

Now that these studies have established the association between their work on well-being and financial performance, we need to show cause and effect. That is, we need to show that organizations that improve the well-being component of their culture (the cause) also improve their organizational performance (the effect). If you know of any forward-thinking leaders of organizations with self-funded health plans that might like to give it a try, please have them contact me at jack.curtis@chp-inc.com.

For more details on the three new JOEM studies, please see:

- Tracking the Market Performance of Companies That Integrate a Culture of Health and Safety: An Assessment of Corporate Health Achievement Award Applicants
- The Stock Performance of C. Everett Koop Award Winners Compared to the Standard & Poor’s 500 Index
• Linking Workplace Health Promotion Best Practices and Organizational Financial Performance: Tracking Market Performance of Companies With Highest Scores on the HERO Scorecard