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**ATTENTION: PERSONAL FINANCE & BUSINESS**

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**FINANCIAL DISTRESS TAKING TOLL ON EMPLOYEE HEALTH**

“Financially distressed employees have trouble functioning in their jobs, and this is hurting their physical health as well as taking a bite out of the employer’s bottom line,” says Dr. E. Thomas Garman, president, Personal Finance Employee Education Foundation (PFEEF).

Poor financial health also negatively impacts emotional health. One-third of school, hospital, and technology employees surveyed reported they were so sad or down they could not perform the tasks expected of them at work, and this was directly related to high levels of financial distress.

Financially unhealthy employees are more likely to smoke, eat unhealthy diets, be overweight, and are less likely to exercise regularly, researchers found. Such lifestyle risks contribute to poor health outcomes--another factor connected with reduced workplace productivity and more absenteeism.

Worry about mounting debt and telephone calls from creditors diverts employees’ attention from job responsibilities. PFEEF Director of Research, Dr. Aimee Prawitz, contends that, “Depending upon the workplace, 30% to 80% of employees waste work time dealing with personal financial matters, and it typically amounts to 12 to 20 hours a month.”

“Research shows clear links among financial distress, workplace productivity, and health. Employers who improve employees’ financial well-being will see improvements in their bottom lines as well,” says researcher Pete Shatwell of Two Medicine Health & Financial Fitness in Bozeman, Montana.

Brad Barron, president of CLC Inc., and a member of PFEEF’s Board of Trustees, says, “Think twice employers—employee financial problems are their own but it’s your problem.”

Of 441 employees surveyed in Colorado and Montana by Two Medicine, 36% reported reduced emotional health, including depressive symptoms; 26% of this group, however, stated they had no plans for managing their emotional health. Whether such employees do not know where to turn for help or do not seek help for other reasons, the outcomes for employees are negative.

PFEEF shares research, expertise, and best practices demonstrating that profits increase when employees have easy access to financial education resources to reduce personal financial distress and improve financial well-being. All information on the PFEEF website is available at no cost ([www.PersonalFinanceFoundation.org](http://www.PersonalFinanceFoundation.org)).

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