



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Alere's Dr. Michael Taitel Presents Compelling Evidence at IBI/NBCH Health & Productivity Forum that Wellness Programs Positively Impact Health & Productivity**

**Atlanta, GA – February 4, 2010** – For years, employers have suspected that investing in wellness programs is good for business. However, many employers still have difficulty proving that wellness programs are having the desired impact. Michael Taitel, PhD, vice president of the Alere Center for Health Intelligence at Alere Health LLC, a leader in personal health support solutions, will present new and compelling evidence from a study demonstrating that participation in wellness programs does indeed have a positive impact on population health by reducing health risks. Dr. Taitel's presentation will take place at the IBI/NBCH Health & Productivity Forum February 8-10 in San Antonio, Texas.

The Forum is hosted annually by the Integrated Benefits Institute and the National Business Coalition on Health. It fosters objective discussion and evaluation of the latest practical approaches to investing in and promoting workforce health and productivity among employers, their supplier-partners and other health and productivity stakeholders.

Taitel's findings are part of a joint presentation he is co-presenting with Alice Villanueva, senior vice president of Human Resources for Alere client John Muir Health, a family of physicians, non-profit hospitals, urgent care centers and other healthcare services. The presentation, "Integrating Medical Claims, Health Risk & Productivity: Results from a Comprehensive Health and Wellness Strategy," will begin with an overview of John Muir Health's claims experience and wellness strategy and continue with a three-year study of John Muir's wellness program impact on medical claims, health risk and productivity. Taitel will then present an overview of a wellness participation study conducted by the Alere Center for Health Intelligence with two other Alere top tier employer clients.

The participation study compared the health risks of employees who only participated in the health risk assessment (HRA) with employees who participated both in the HRA and additional wellness programs following the assessment. The organizations assessed included a multi-sited technology and communications company with 32,000 employees and a multi-sited, aerospace and defense company with 25,000 employees. Results in both cases consistently showed that employees who participated in wellness programs following the HRA experienced significantly higher reductions in health risks than employees who only completed the HRA.

"We initiated this study to determine the value of providing incentives to improve participation in wellness programs after the initial HRA," Taitel says. "We found that participation in wellness programs in addition to the HRA does result in a significantly greater risk reduction for such cost-driving factors as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, stress, tobacco use and obesity, among others. And this translates into greater healthcare and productivity savings."

"These findings show that when employees participate in wellness programs, their health risks and associated health costs decrease over time," says Taitel. "This supports the call for employers to provide both incentives for participation and investment in the communications and leadership, along with the grassroots support (effort) needed to develop an organizational culture of health."

Dr. Taitel has led groundbreaking research on wellness-related issues conducted by the Alere Center for Health Intelligence. In 2008, he published a study in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (JOEM)* that examined various factors that influence employee participation in health risk assessments.<sup>1</sup> Last year, he was an author of the largest multiemployer study to date, also published in the *JOEM*, which showed that employers who focus only on medical and pharmacy costs in creating employee health strategies do not account for the large cost of health-related lost productivity and may misidentify the health conditions most impacting their costs.<sup>2</sup>

#### **About Alere**

Alere ([www.alere.com](http://www.alere.com)) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Inverness Medical Innovations, Inc. ([www.invernessmedical.com](http://www.invernessmedical.com)) (NYSE: IMA). Alere, a Latin verb, meaning "to care for" or "to support", offers the most patient-centered health management services available from a single provider in the industry. Alere services provide health interventions that are designed for the entire lifespan from pre-cradle (high-risk pregnancy and NICU management) to end-of-life care (complex care) as well as the continuum of health from wellness (health and productivity programs) and prevention to total health management of the individual for those having various chronic illnesses.

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, "Incentives and Other Factors Associated with Employee Participation in Health Risk Assessments," Taitel et al., Vol. 50, No. 8, August 2008

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, "Health and Productivity as a Business Strategy," Loeppke et al., Vol. 51, No. 4, April 2009