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PARTICIPANTS SHED MORE THAN 20,000 POUNDS IN EMPLOYER-SPONSORED HEALTH CHALLENGE

*Hennepin County, Connexus Energy and Central Boiler win first place
in competition's Weight Loss, Steps and Exercise categories.*

MINNEAPOLIS – Minnesota employers and community organizations geared up for summer with the BizicallyFIT 2012 Health Challenge and earned incredible healthy lifestyle results. Ten thousand Minnesotans from every corner of the state joined together with coworkers, friends and family to take extra steps, exercise more and drop some extra pounds, competing for online rankings and bragging rights. Together they lost 20,409 pounds, walked 1,610,427,079 steps and exercised 13,176,822 minutes. One lucky participant won the grand prize drawing, a free one-week stay at a Biggest Loser Resort.

“We’re very happy to see the successes of Minnesotans who took time to engage in the BizicallyFIT 2012 Health Challenge,” says Tom Mason, president of the Alliance for a Healthier Minnesota. “It’s amazing how effective friendly competition and support from employers, coworkers, friends and family can in motivating people to adopt and maintain healthier habits.”

While all 2012 Health Challenge participants made progress towards healthier lifestyle goals and the average participant lost 2 percent of his or her body weight, the highest-ranking team averaged 9.3 percent weight loss, which would bring a 215-pound person down to 195. Teams ranged in size from one to 11 participants with some organizations forming multiple teams to accommodate the large numbers of people participating in the Challenge. Teams of five or more people were ranked on a weekly leaderboard by their team’s average activity.

The free statewide competition was designed to encourage Minnesota’s employers to help employees adopt healthy lifestyles. In addition to tracking pounds lost, minutes exercised and steps walked, the Challenge also featured social networking tools and mini-challenges that allowed participants to easily communicate with team members and rival teams to maintain momentum throughout its 12-week duration.

A few highlights from the Challenge:

- Two teams from Hennepin County Government earned a first place ranking in the Exercise and Weight Loss divisions, besting more than 1,600 other teams. The “Henn Fair” team placed first in Weight Loss with an average of 9.3 percent weight loss over the 12-week competition and Hennepin County’s “Skywalkers” ranked first in Exercise with a team average of 88 minutes of exercise per day. A total of 1,086 individuals joined the Challenge through Hennepin County Government employee teams. Together, they walked 248,050,732 steps and exercised 1,764,465 minutes over the course of the 12-week Challenge.
- “Aletia’s Dream Team” of coworkers from Greenbush, Minnesota-based Central Boiler won first place in the Pedometer Steps division of the Challenge with a team average of 17,030 steps each day. Of Central

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Boiler's roughly 200 employees, 88 of them joined the BizicallyFIT 2012 Health Challenge this spring, along with other healthy activities, to earn a \$50 credit that can be applied to health care premiums, a health savings account or used to purchase Central Boiler merchandise from the company store.

- Willmar, Minnesota took a community-wide approach, coordinating the YMCA, Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, Affiliated Community Medical Centers, Ridgewater College, Family Practice Medical Center, Rice Memorial Hospital and many local small businesses to build a group of more than 60 Challenge participants who together exercised 95,011 minutes and walked 16,461,929 steps over the course of the 12-week Challenge.

Individual health has a significant impact on employer costs, and working to support health and wellness can make a positive difference. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 75 percent of employers' healthcare costs are related to employee lifestyle choices. That's why forward-thinking employers of all sizes are implementing plans to help employees embrace healthier lifestyles. The CDC also says companies that sponsor health and wellness programs get a return on their investment of between \$3-\$6 for every dollar spent over a two to five-year period.

The BizicallyFIT 2012 Health Challenge is sponsored by the Alliance for a Healthier Minnesota, a group of Minnesota companies joined together to create fun, engaging and informative events and competitions to help Minnesotans get and stay healthy. Alliance members that made this challenge possible include Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Cargill, Medica, the Midwest Dairy Association and Target. Learn more at www.healthiermn.com.

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