

September 29, 2008

When we signed our letters of commitment to join the Well City Milwaukee initiative and implement best practice employee wellness programs in our organizations, the goal of Milwaukee becoming a Well City USA by 2010 seemed far away. Baird is now 18 months into the process, and I am delighted at the progress Well City Milwaukee has made in recruiting additional member employers, keeping the initiative visible and, most importantly, supporting and recognizing staff – yours and mine – as they work to become Well Workplaces as a first step in the journey toward Well City designation.

I am writing today to thank you for participating in this important initiative to address the health and lifestyle crisis we face in our community. I would also like to share some information about what Baird has been doing and to encourage you to remain a steadfast wellness leader in your organization.

At Baird, our wellness program is showing measurable improvement in associates' overall wellness score and in top risk factors. I'm particularly proud of the following accomplishments:

- We have a 94% participation rate in Health Risk Assessments to date for 2008.
- Associates participating in a subsidized Weight Watcher program have lost more than 1,467 pounds -- an average loss of nearly 15 pounds per person.
- We anticipate becoming an accredited "Well Workplace" in 2009

I believe employee wellness is the right thing to do and that it is an important business strategy, deserving appropriate human and financial resources in order to be successful. I know our human resources and wellness team face very real challenges as they encourage associates to adopt healthier lifestyles. CEO and senior leadership support is crucial to their success, so I know I must be engaged in our program and lead by example. Let's all do that together.

