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**Virgin HealthMiles and the STOP Obesity Alliance Rally Corporate America
to Create Healthier Workplace Communities**

***Declare September 2009
“National Employee Wellness Month”***

BOSTON, Mass and Washington, D.C. – August 13, 2009-- This September, [Virgin HealthMiles](#) in partnership with the [Strategies to Overcome and Prevent \(STOP\) Obesity Alliance](#), will sponsor the first annual [National Employee Wellness Month](#) to raise awareness about the benefits of [workplace wellness](#) and educate business leaders and employees about how they can take steps to create healthier and more physically active workplace communities.

As America grapples with healthcare reform and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issues a new report stating that medical costs of treating obesity-related diseases may have doubled over the last decade rising as high as \$147 billion in 2008, National Employee Wellness Month is designed to inspire corporate America to serve as critical change-agents in helping employees lead healthier, more physically active lives.

According to the STOP Obesity Alliance, the workplace is one important environment that could be better leveraged to fight obesity. In fact, a 2008 survey by the STOP Obesity Alliance and the National Opinion Research Center found that employers and employees agree that the workplace is an appropriate environment for supporting weight loss efforts and helping curb the toll of [preventable chronic diseases](#).

Promoting [employee health](#) is an investment not only in human capital, but also in preserving the bottom line. Healthcare costs continue to rise eight percent year over year, and according to a recent report by the Kaiser Family Foundation, employers are absorbing 70-80 percent of this increase in costs.

Even as healthcare reform is taking shape, government can't do it alone. Forward-looking employers have already recognized the role the private sector can - and must - play in encouraging greater physical activity and more healthful choices on the part of their employees to prevent the onset of lifestyle-related chronic conditions which, according to the CDC, account for 75 percent, or \$1.5 trillion, of our nation's healthcare costs. The workplace has the potential to serve as a critical "community" for helping employees become more physically active.

For more information about National Employee Wellness Month, contact Kathy Wilson at kwilson@tieronepr.com or 781-652-0499.

About Virgin HealthMiles and the STOP Obesity Alliance

[Virgin HealthMiles](#) is an industry leading provider of employee health and activity programs that pay people to get active. Its award-winning, Pay-for-Prevention™ approach, based on physical activity and healthy lifestyle change, attracts an average of 40% of employees who participate in the program

regularly, which helps organizations reduce medical costs and improve employee productivity and satisfaction.

The [Strategies to Overcome and Prevent \(STOP\) Obesity Alliance](#) is a collaboration of consumer, provider, government, labor, business, health insurers and quality-of-care organizations united to drive innovative and practical strategies that combat obesity. The Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance receives funding from its sponsors, sanofi-aventis U.S. LLC., founding sponsor, and Amylin Pharmaceuticals, Inc., supporting sponsor.

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