STATE OF UTAH

OLENE S. WALKER
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY
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GAYLE F. MCKEACHNIE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

TO: All Department and Agency Heads

FROM: Olene S. Walker, Governor Olene S. Walker

DATE: January 1, 2004

RE: Administrative Leave Time and Support for the Healthy Utah Program

This memorandum is being written to urge you and your employees to attend the Healthy Utah Assessment and Education workshops. Healthy Utah focuses on the major lifestyle risk factors for heart disease (cholesterol, weight, body composition, blood pressure, and cigarette smoking) and targets employees interested in improving their health and fitness level.

In order to encourage maximum employee participation, I support the Healthy Utah program by approving up to three hours release time per fiscal year for participating employees. I also urge you to form a team within your agency to address wellness at local levels and to support additional health promotion programs in your department and satellite offices throughout the year.

I would like to remind you that worksite health promotion programs can increase employee productivity and morale, decrease absenteeism, lower medical utilization rates and, most importantly, increase our employees' chances of living healthy and productive lives. According to a recent report released by Mercer Human Resource Consulting, researchers predict that in 2004, Utahns will see their overall health care coverage costs rise at a rate higher than the rest of the nation – roughly 3 percent higher, at approximately $7,150 per worker. Some of these costs may be shifted to workers through higher contributions.

Let us continue our commitment to a healthier and more productive workforce. Please:

- Identify one staff member to serve as the Healthy Utah contact person for your department and encourage that person to contact Kathy Paras, Healthy Utah Program Manager, at 801-538-6261.
- Make sure your management staff are aware of the Healthy Utah Program and the annual three-hour work release policy.
- Encourage members of your department staff to attend Healthy Utah.
- Support wellness efforts within your department.

As administrators, we must support assertive action to manage health care costs by keeping employees healthy. The Healthy Utah program is a useful tool in this endeavor. Healthy Utah information may be accessed at www.healthyutah.org. If you have additional questions regarding Healthy Utah, please call (801) 538-6261 or 888-222-2542. Thank you.