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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Provider Offers Access to National Health Management Trend Tools

BUFFALO, N.Y., May 22, 2010 – BWI Health Promotions has one more workplace wellness tool in its arsenal for companies in Western New York and the surrounding area looking to evaluate employee health. The Health Risk Appraisal (HRA), a nationally recognized measurement device used by health and wellness practitioners, provides a comprehensive view of workforce health and pinpoints risk factors that may be addressed through lifestyle changes.

HRAs analyze each individual's overall wellness, which includes both physical and emotional factors, through a battery of questions that touch on health, nutrition, exercise, safety habits, stress and more. Every employee receives a personal and confidential report profiling his or her health and detailing potential risks. The data and reports are consolidated into an executive summary for the employer, which also identifies costs associated with high-risk categories.

The customized HRA used by BWI, a wellness provider for companies and schools, is a product of nationally recognized health management technologies provider TRALE. TRALE supplies this service to the Wellness Council of America – North America's premier resource for worksite wellness – as well as state governments and companies in the United States, Canada and Australia. HRAs offered through BWI are overseen by Dr. Ronald Santasiero, MD, BWI medical director.

The assessment tool is becoming more widely used in the field of worksite wellness because of its ability to identify candidates for care management and serve as a barometer of future healthcare costs.

Two other health appraisals have been offered by BWI for years. Fitness assessments include areas such as exercise target heart rate, flexibility, strength, body composition and lung volume. Biometric screenings incorporate such data as blood pressure and cholesterol. Offering the HRA along with these traditional health measurements gives information about lifestyle choices and other factors which may be influencing health status.

"You can't manage your health properly unless you know your numbers," said Shawna Dossier, BWI president. "The HRA gives us one more tool to do that."

The simple process of completing an HRA on a regular basis can lead to better health, according to a study published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* in April 2009. The study found that 41.4 percent of employees who experienced repeated HRAs improved their health status and 26 percent had worse health status, compared to 38.1 percent and 31 percent, respectively, among the one-time HRA employees.

As a consultant and provider of health promotion services, BWI aids companies in not only determining how to use test results to bring about beneficial change for the employees and employer, but helps individuals reach their goals through determining a healthy lifestyle plan. BWI's educational and personal health coaching services are an integral component of developing lifelong behavior change.

"We can help a company interpret their results. BWI can come on-site and say, 'These are the concerns, and this is what we can do,'" said Julie Traulsen, BWI program manager and exercise physiologist, in referring to BWI's slate of programs. "We are a one-stop shop. People are short on time and short on money. Our goal is to make it easy for them."

BWI is the only third-party vendor offering the HRA locally to complement insurance programs. Unlike working through an insurance provider that retains infinite rights to the data, utilizing BWI means having access, year after year, to the information.

Paper and electronic versions of the HRA are available for customer convenience, depending on preference. The paper version is made possible through a portable computer, brought on-site to the company, while the electronic version extends BWI's reach nationally, at any time, through online access. In addition to personal reports and the executive summary, queries for groups or divisions within a department are available.

Company executives are invited to sample the paper HRA at BWI's Comprehensive Wellness Management Showcase, from 8 to 11 a.m. on June 18 at Brierwood Country Club in Hamburg. The electronic version may also be sampled online, at no charge, at BWI's website, www.bwihp.com.

For more information about HRAs, the BWI Showcase in June, or how BWI services can benefit your organization, call BWI President Shawna Dosser at 716-992-2732, e-mail battleworks@verizon.net or visit the website.

BWI Health Promotions has been a regional leader of comprehensive wellness management solutions, team-building, fitness programs and worksite health since 1994. Its goal is to provide customized health promotion services that positively impact an organization's bottom line and produce measurable results.

Photo cutline:

From left, Jeanne Redmond and Morgan O'Donnell of BWI Health Promotions file paper health risk assessments (HRAs), after running them through a portable computer and printer, to obtain reports for employees at Unifrax I LLC.

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