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## Fact Sheet

### ***VOLUNTEERING AND YOUR HEALTH: HOW GIVING BACK BENEFITS EVERYONE***

A survey released by UnitedHealthcare, a UnitedHealth Group company, and VolunteerMatch identifies some of the key health benefits of volunteering. *The UnitedHealthcare/VolunteerMatch Do Good. Live Well. Survey* of more than 4,500 American adults found that 68 percent of those who volunteered in the past year report that volunteering has made them feel physically healthier.

#### **Volunteering and Health:**

Volunteers agree that volunteering helps them to lead healthier lives.

- 34% of volunteers are considered to have an “average” BMI, compared to 27% of non-volunteers.
- 68% of volunteers agree that “volunteering has made me feel physically healthier.”
- 29% of volunteers who suffer from a chronic condition agree that “volunteering has helped me manage a chronic illness.”
- 89% of volunteers agree that “volunteering has improved my sense of well-being.”
- 73% of volunteers agree that “volunteering lowers my stress levels.”
- Volunteering appears to correspond to a healthier BMI, with a lower proportion of volunteers (31%) identified as obese when compared to non-volunteers (36%).

#### **Volunteering and Satisfaction with Life:**

Volunteering appears to correspond with higher levels of life satisfaction – including a greater sense of meaning and purpose and higher levels of optimism.

- 92% of volunteers agree that volunteering enriches their sense of purpose in life.
- Volunteers are significantly more likely (72%) to characterize themselves as “optimistic” compared to non-volunteers (60%).
- They are also significantly more likely (36%) to rate their overall satisfaction with their lives as “very good” compared to non-volunteers (26%).
- Volunteers are significantly more likely (42%) to say they have a “very good” sense of meaning in their lives, compared to non-volunteers (28%).
- Volunteers are significantly more likely (40%) to say they have a “very good” sense of purpose in their life, compared to non-volunteers (27%).

#### **Volunteering Rates and Relationship to Work:**

More than four in every 10 Americans have volunteered in the last year. Among those volunteers who are employed, a quarter has done so through work. Employer involvement in volunteer activities is seen as important.

- 41% of Americans have volunteered in the past year (e.g., engaged in unpaid service activities, not including giving money or donations).
- 69% of Americans have made donations to an organization in the past year.

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- 44% of Americans report that they intend to volunteer in 2010, with many citing “the opportunity to make a difference” as the motivation.
- 25% of those who volunteer do so through their place of work.
- Among those 25% who volunteer through work:
  - 84% agree that “more people would volunteer if their employers helped provide the means and the motivation.”
  - 81% agree that “volunteering with work colleagues has strengthened our relationships.”
  - 76% agree that “I feel better about my employer because of their involvement in my volunteer activities.”
  - 21% agree that “I would not be a volunteer if it wasn’t for my employer.”
  - 88% of all volunteers agree that volunteering provides networking/career development opportunities.

**UnitedHealthcare/VolunteerMatch Benefits of Volunteering Survey Methodology**

In February 2010, UnitedHealthcare and VolunteerMatch sponsored a study among Americans to understand patterns of volunteering in the United States and its relationship to health and well-being. An online survey was administered to a national sample of 4,582 Americans over the age of 18 regarding their health and their propensity to volunteer. The sampling plan was balanced and the data were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the U.S. adult population.

The main objectives of the study were to assess current perceptions of Americans’ own physical and emotional health, determine attitudes and beliefs about volunteering, determine the effect of volunteering on the volunteer, measure incidence and motivation of volunteerism in the U.S., gauge popularity and impact of workplace volunteer opportunities, and highlight the differences between seniors who volunteer and those who do not in terms of health and lifestyle.

The study was conducted by TNS (Taylor Nelson Sofres) from Feb. 25 to March 8, 2010. TNS is the world’s largest custom research agency. TNS provides comprehensive industry knowledge within the Consumer, Technology, Finance, Automotive and Political & Social sectors, supported by a unique product offering that stretches across the entire range of marketing and business issues, specializing in product development & innovation, brand & communication, stakeholder management, retail & shopper, and qualitative research. Delivering best-in-class service across more than 75 countries, TNS is part of Kantar, the world’s largest research, insight and consultancy network. Please visit [www.tns-global.com](http://www.tns-global.com) for more information. Complete results of the survey can be viewed at [www.DoGoodLiveWell.org/OurCommitment.html](http://www.DoGoodLiveWell.org/OurCommitment.html) .

**About UnitedHealth Group**

UnitedHealth Group is a diversified health and well-being company dedicated to making health care work better. Headquartered in Minneapolis, Minn., UnitedHealth Group offers a broad spectrum of products and services through six operating businesses: UnitedHealthcare, Ovations, AmeriChoice, OptumHealth, Ingenix, and Prescription Solutions. Through its family of businesses, UnitedHealth Group serves more than 70 million individuals nationwide.

**About VolunteerMatch**

VolunteerMatch is a national nonprofit dedicated to strengthening communities by helping good people and good causes to connect. Its award-winning online service, [www.VolunteerMatch.org](http://www.VolunteerMatch.org), makes it easy to find a way to make a difference by location, expertise, or availability, and is the #1 ranking for “volunteer” on Google, Yahoo! and Bing. In addition to its public Web site, VolunteerMatch provides many of the nation’s most recognized businesses, campuses and organizations with Web-based solutions to facilitate and track their volunteer engagement. The VolunteerMatch network regularly welcomes more than 190,000 visitors each week and has become the preferred volunteer recruiting service for tens of thousands of participating nonprofits.

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