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## **Job Stress, Stress-Linked Health Problems Increase in Chicago**

*Number of Chicago workers satisfied with their jobs declines , APA survey says*

CHICAGO, Nov 9, 2010 – Work, the economy and money are the most often reported significant causes of stress for residents of Chicago, and four in 10 adults report that their stress levels increased in the past year, according to a survey released today by the American Psychological Association (APA) and conducted online by Harris Interactive in August 2010. While half of residents say they are doing enough to manage their stress, more are reporting diagnoses of health problems, many of which are often linked to chronic stress.

The survey showed that four in 10 adults worry that the state's financial crisis may impact their personal life or their families, lessening their ability to access health care services (40 percent), personal safety (39 percent) and emergency services (39 percent).

In addition, more than 70 percent of residents cite work (74 percent), the economy (71 percent) and money (70 percent) as significant causes of stress. Chicagoans are increasingly worried about their personal health as 63 percent report it as a source of stress, up from 37 percent in 2009. While the majority of Chicago adults say healthy stress management is important (59 percent), only 35 percent say they are successful in their efforts at stress management.

Workplace stress is also on the rise as 37 percent report feeling tense or stressed out during the work day, up from 28 in 2009. The number of workers satisfied with their jobs continues to decline in Chicago. Sixty percent said they were satisfied this year, down from 66 percent in 2009 and 74 percent in 2008.

Nearly a quarter of residents report being too busy to take steps to relieve stress (24 percent) or when they do, they turn to food (35 percent). Unhealthy stress management takes a toll on the body. More residents reported being told by a healthcare provider that they have high blood pressure (29 percent this year to 19 percent in 2009). Nearly half of adults have been told by a healthcare provider that they need to exercise more (45 percent) or lose weight (39 percent).

Although most Chicago adults have been told to make changes to improve their health, fewer than half (46 percent) exercise regularly and about one-quarter (23 percent) report they never exercise. Lack of willpower is cited by 32 percent of residents as a barrier to making recommended lifestyle changes.

More than one-third who are not exercising regularly say the biggest barrier to doing so is lack of motivation (36 percent).

“The level of stress in Chicago, particularly regarding workplace stress, continues to be a concern, especially since we know there is a strong connection between chronic stress and serious health problems,” said Dr. Nancy Molitor, public education coordinator for the Illinois Psychological Association. “It’s also alarming that so many people report health problems and that they struggle with adopting the necessary lifestyle changes that can improve their health.”

At a national level, the annual Stress in America survey shows that Americans appear to be caught in a vicious cycle where they manage stress in unhealthy ways, and lack of willpower and time constraints impede their ability to make lifestyle or behavioral changes. In general, Americans recognize that their stress levels remain high and exceed what they consider to be healthy.

The national survey also found that while reported stress levels across the nation remain similar to last year, fewer adults report being satisfied with the ways that their employer helps employees balance work and personal life demands, and in general, concern about job stability is on the rise.

To read the full report on Chicago and the United States, visit [www.stressinamerica.org](http://www.stressinamerica.org).

Stress in America is part of APA’s Mind/Body Health public education campaign. For additional information on stress and lifestyle and behavior, visit [www.apa.org/helpcenter](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter) and read the campaign blog [www.yourmindyourbody.org](http://www.yourmindyourbody.org). Join the conversation about stress on Twitter by following @apahelpcenter and #stressAPA. Get your questions answered on November 10 at 2:00 p.m. EST for a live chat with psychologists at [www.facebook.com/americanpsychologicalassociation](http://www.facebook.com/americanpsychologicalassociation).

## **Methodology**

*The Stress in America Survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the American Psychological Association between August 3 and 27, 2010, of 1,134 adults aged 18+ who reside in the U.S. In addition, an oversample of 208 adults living in the Chicago MSA was collected. MSAs are a formal definition of metropolitan areas produced by OMB (Office of Management and Budget). These geographic areas are delineated on the basis of central urbanized areas — contiguous counties of relatively high population density. Counties containing the core urbanized area are known as the central counties of the MSA. Additional surrounding counties (known as outlying counties) can be included in the MSA if these counties have strong social and economic ties to the central counties as measured by commuting and employment. Note that some areas within these outlying counties may actually be rural in nature. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. To read the full methodology, visit [www.stressinamerica.org](http://www.stressinamerica.org).*

*The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world’s largest association of psychologists. APA’s membership includes more than 150,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.*

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