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HHS HONORS UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HEALTH SYSTEM MFit EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt announced today that the University of Michigan Health System is one of ten nationwide winners of the Third Annual Innovation in Prevention Awards for its MFit Employee Wellness Program aimed at educating, motivating and empowering employees to make healthy lifestyle choices. Secretary Leavitt will present the awards on October 24th at a luncheon in Washington, DC.

The award was created as part of President Bush's *HealthierUS* initiative and HHS's continuing focus on preventing chronic disease and improving Americans' lives. The awards highlight businesses and organizations that are leading efforts to promote healthier lifestyles in seven different areas. The University of Michigan Health System was honored in the Large Employer category.

"The University of Michigan Health System's MFit Employee Wellness Program provides an example of how employers can promote healthy practices in the workplace," Secretary Leavitt said. "To promote healthier lifestyles, we need more employers to follow the University of Michigan's lead in enabling employees to make changes that improve their lives."

Some of the services the University of Michigan Health System offers employees through the MFit Program are: health and fitness screenings, individual and group consultations, incentive programs, seminars and classes, special events, educational materials and fitness center discounts. MFit staff is expertly trained to help employees in areas such as physical activity, nutrition, weight management, tobacco cessation, alcohol management and stress management. MFit has also created a healthy work environment through the MFit Dining Program, which provides healthy meal options for employees, a smoke-free campus, walking trails and bike lockers.

"I'm delighted that the University of Michigan Health System is being recognized for its commitment to the health and well-being of our employees. We believe that promoting a healthy, safe and satisfied workforce contributes not only to individual success but to organizational success as well."

In support of the strategic objectives of the University of Michigan Health System, MFit also launched the "Healthy Workforce Initiative," which includes an intensive communications campaign called "Taking Care of Our Own," a "Physical Activity for Life Challenge," a wellness

expo featuring Dr. Ken Cooper, a healthy eating incentive program and “Ask the Expert” email services for employees. New managers receive training on “Protecting and Promoting Employee Health and Well-Being” and all new employees are oriented to the resources available to help them.

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>. To request an interview or additional information, contact Jessica Badger at 202-690-6343, Jessica.Badger@hhs.gov or Brian Wesolowski at 202-414-0779, brian@susandavis.com.