

Welcoming the New Year with a Positive Attitude!

This sounds like a difficult if not impossible task given the news of the day. But if one looks *beyond* the headlines, there are some very good things happening!

- An Improving Economy:** In a November, 2009 report, The Associated Press reveals that “a flurry of good news—including falling jobless rates, stronger consumer spending and higher new-home sales—suggests that the economic rebound, modest though it may be, might just be here to stay.” This view is reinforced by economist Ken Mayland of ClearView Economics who comments: “It is not a gallop. But it is still forward movement.”
- Cancer Deaths Decline:** A 2009 report in the medical journal *Cancer Research* states that “The number of cancer deaths has declined steadily in the last three decades. Although younger people have experienced the steepest declines, all age groups have shown significant improvement.” In a separate report, Dr. Richard Severson, a cancer epidemiologist at Wayne State University Department of Family Medicine, states that “In childhood cancer particularly, we’re able to do amazing things with leukemia and lymphoma that used to be a death sentence—but now we are curing many of these cancers.”
- Life Expectancy Longer Than Ever:** According to the Centers for Disease Control, life expectancy in the United States has surged to 77.7 years. The numbers are even better for Canada where the life expectancy has reached a record 80.4 years according to Statistics Canada.
- The Promise of “Herd Immunity”:** The nationwide incidence of H1N1 infections and related visits to physicians’ offices for influenza-related visits decreased slightly while the production and delivery of H1N1 vaccine accelerated during late 2009. Some researchers are hopeful that a form of “herd immunity” also known as “community immunity” may be occurring. This means that as more people become resistant to the virus via preventive inoculations or from having actually experienced the disease, the lower the threat to the unprotected population. Herd immunity is generally believed to have been the major reason for the eradication of smallpox and diphtheria.
- American Savings Rate Surges:** According to Bloomberg News, “Americans are building their nest eggs at the fastest pace in 15 years.” The household savings rate—which was exactly zero in 2008—grew to 6.9% of income during 2009. While this may not be the best news for retailers, it is definitely good news for the banking industry where deposits now exceed \$7.5 trillion. The Federal Reserve believes that the increase in personal savings will put the country’s finances in better balance and reduce our dependence on overseas investments.



So as we enter 2010, let’s make a concerted attempt to maintain a hopeful, optimistic perspective. And always remember that for those times in the New Year when problems or challenges do present themselves, the professionals at your Employee Assistance Program are standing by to provide expert help—24 hours per day!