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MEDIA RELEASE

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"In this economy, you're lucky to have a job." So why is absenteeism at an all-time-high?
HR professionals say job opportunities abound for workers with the right skills

Vancouver, B.C. – "In this tough economic climate, you're lucky to have a job at all." We've all heard this familiar refrain in recent months, but if it's true, why are employees absent more often and resigning more frequently?

British Columbia's Human Resources Management Association (BC HRMA) reports that annual absenteeism for 2010 was 30% higher than in 2009, and based on results for the second quarter of 2011, this rise is continuing. Contributing factors include an aging workforce with higher healthcare needs, lower levels of employee commitment, employee burnout, but perhaps most significantly, an increasing number of employees job hunting and attending job interviews.

"It's a myth that there are no job opportunities out there," said Ian Cook, Director, Research and Learning and Certified Human Resources Professional with BC HRMA. "In fact, workers with the right skill sets are in high demand. We're facing a mismatch between the skills available and the roles available. What's more, employers prefer to hire candidates who are already working rather than those who are not. As a result, we're seeing a trend of key talent getting up to leave."

A significant underlying factor is a growing level of job dissatisfaction among Canadian workers. A recent poll by Mercer's found that of 2,000 Canadian employees surveyed, 1 in 3 were considering leaving their employer.

These opinions are supported by hard facts. The number of people who left their employer voluntarily (resignations) increased by 50% between 2009 and 2010. Results to Q2 of 2011 suggest this higher rate of departures is continuing. At the same time, organizations are finding it harder to fill these empty positions. The number of positions vacant in Q2 of 2011 was up 80% from the same quarter in 2010.

Cook's advice to employers: "Invest in and retain your key talent. Otherwise, alongside an increase in absenteeism, you could be facing an employee turnover problem."

BC HRMA is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing professional people practices through professional development opportunities such as conference, workshops, symposiums, and mentorship and volunteer programs. The association provides leadership to more than 5,200 members and 3,000 affiliates that collectively represent CEOs, directors of HR, consultants, educators, students, HR generalists, and small-business owners. Established in 1942, BC HRMA is a founding member of the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) and the exclusive grantor of the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation in British Columbia.

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<http://www.mercer.com/press-releases/1418865>

Link to Mercer survey on employee disengagement