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American Well-Being, Quality of Life Plummet in the Midst of U.S. Financial Crisis

*Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index™ Passes One Year Milestone,
Finds Americans Struggling on Many Fronts*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. and WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 15, 2009 – The economic meltdown during the second half of 2008 fundamentally altered the well-being of millions of Americans, negatively impacting numerous aspects of life beyond job security and finances. That’s according to fresh evidence published today from the groundbreaking Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index (WBI), on the occasion of the Index’s one year anniversary.

Well-Being, measured by the WBI, took a dramatic plunge in the last quarter of 2008, after being relatively stable through the year, slipping from an annual high of 67.0 in February to an all time low of 63.3 in December, a drop of 5.5 points, or 8.2 percent (See: Figure A). The WBI is made up of a proprietary combination of six sub-indices: Life Evaluation, Emotional Health, Basic Access, Physical Health, Work Environment and Healthy Behavior.

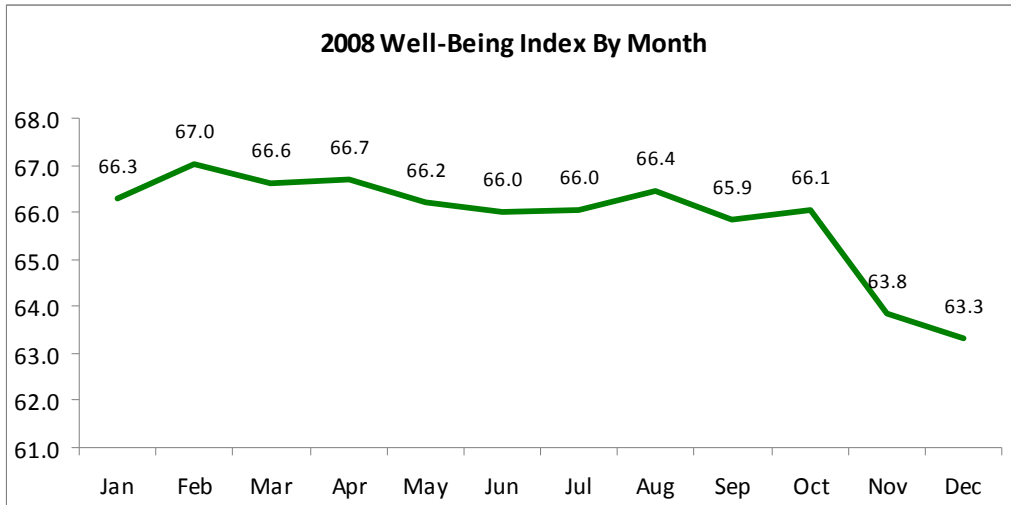
“We saw moderate to significant declines in all but one of the sub-indices that comprise the Well-Being Index,” said Jim Pope, M.D., Healthways chief science officer. “As anticipated, the greatest decline was reflected in the Life Evaluation sub-index, but the trend that may be of most long-term concern was the decrease in Healthy Behaviors.”

Specifically, the Healthy Behavior sub-index score dropped more than 5.3 points between May and December, an 8.2 percent decrease, the second biggest decline of all the sub-indices.

“This is a finding we’re going to have to watch carefully to see if it’s a seasonal effect, perhaps related to the holidays and winter weather, or the beginning of a longer term trend tied to the economic situation,” said Virginia Gurley, M.D., M.P.H., Healthways vice president of value and outcomes research. “Diet and exercise directly affect health and overall well-being, which in turn directly affect both the hard dollar and productivity-related costs of health care. Americans in general are unhealthy enough. If healthy behaviors continue to decline, the trend could carry a monumental price tag.”

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Figure A:

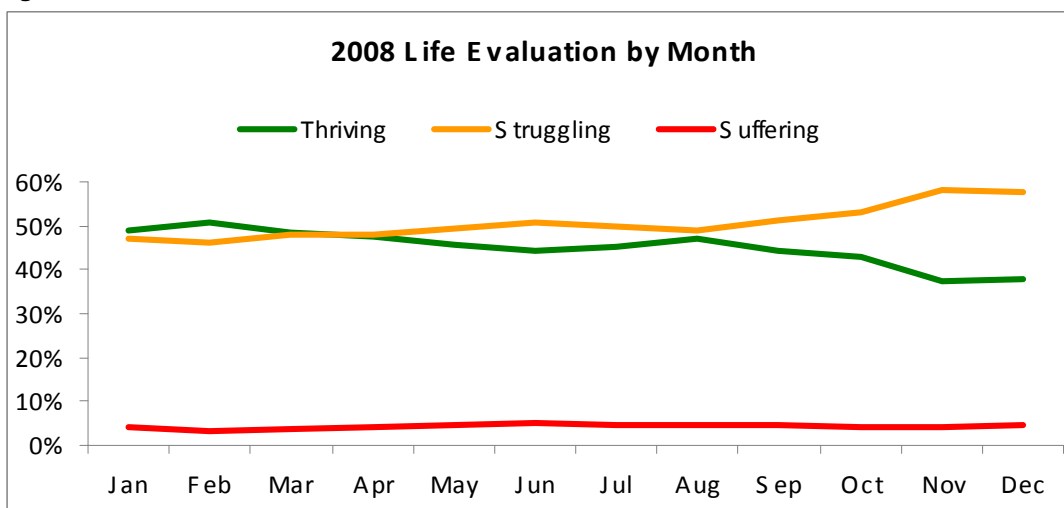


Gallup and Healthways first reported a falling trend in well-being in the U.S. on August 21, with data drawn from the Life Evaluation sub-index, which subdivides the population into three areas: Thriving, Struggling, or Suffering.

In February, 50.7 percent of Americans were Thriving and hopeful about their prospects for the future. (See: Figure B). By November, that number had dropped to 37.4, a decline of 26.0 percent. Conversely, the percentage of those Struggling reached a low of 46.0 in February but increased to 58.3 by November, a 26.7 percent rise. The 12.3 point swing in Struggling Americans represents a negative life change for 27.6 million people. In the third category, 3.3 percent of people were Suffering in February, but by June, that number had increased by 51.5 percent to 5.0, the yearly high. The percentage of Sufferers then moderated as the year went on.

The shift in Struggling affected people at all income levels, but was particularly apparent among working individuals aged 35 years and older with children. The data also suggests that people experienced the economic turbulence in a deeply personal way. The change in percent Struggling is highly associated with how people view their personal standard of living and their individual outlook for the future, rather than how they view the economy in general.

Figure B:



“The nation’s mood dropped in aggregate as the year progressed,” said Jim Harter, Ph.D, Gallup chief researcher. “Even weekends got a bit worse, on average. During the first three months of 2008, approximately half of people reported a lot of happiness and enjoyment without a lot of stress and worry. That number dropped to just 44.0 percent during a typical day in the first half of December. That means more than 11 million people had worse daily moods later in the year. The largest aggregate declines in mood occurred starting in September, when both the effects of the economic crisis and acute illness both started to increase.”

The real power of the WBI is its ability to get underneath surface assumptions about the drivers of well-being and quantitatively measure those drivers and their interaction with one another. Because the Index is so large and comprehensive, drawing data from 1,000 random telephone surveys each day covering every aspect of life, it provides unprecedented insight into the American condition at any point in time or over any defined time period.

To date, approximately 360,000 responses have been collected, making the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index one of the largest and most accurate databases of its kind.

Findings on well-being in 2008, and the trends in the well-being sub-indices are available at www.well-beingindex.com

About the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index™

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is the first and largest survey of its kind, with 1,000 calls a day, seven days a week. It is the official statistic for Well-Being in America, giving a daily measure of people's well-being at the close of every day based on the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health as not only the absence of infirmity and disease but also a state of physical, mental and social well-being. The Well-Being Index describes the correlation between the places where people work and the communities in which they live, and how that and other factors impact their well-being. Additionally, the enterprise version of the Well-Being Index may be administered in workplaces throughout the U.S. to determine the Well-Being score of a specific employer population and how it compares to the employer's state and nation. With such data, employers can uncover and address key factors that impact the productivity and financial health of the organization. For additional information, go to www.well-beingindex.com.

About Healthways

Healthways (NASDAQ: HWAY) is the leading provider of specialized, comprehensive solutions to help millions of people maintain or improve their health and well-being and, as a result, reduce overall costs. Healthways' solutions are designed to help healthy individuals stay healthy, mitigate and slow the progression of disease associated with family or lifestyle risk factors and promote the best possible health for those already affected by disease. Our proven, evidence-based programs provide highly specific and personalized interventions for each individual in a population, irrespective of age or health status, and are delivered to consumers by phone, mail, internet and face-to-face interactions, both domestically and internationally. Healthways also provides a national, fully accredited complementary and alternative Health Provider Network, offering convenient access to individuals who seek health services outside of, and in conjunction with, the traditional healthcare system. For more information, please visit www.healthways.com.

About Gallup

Gallup has studied human nature and behavior for more than 70 years. Gallup's reputation for delivering relevant, timely, and visionary research on what people around the world think and feel is the cornerstone of the organization. Gallup employs many of the world's leading scientists in management, economics, psychology, and sociology, and our consultants assist leaders in identifying and monitoring behavioral economic indicators worldwide. Gallup consultants also help organizations boost organic growth by increasing customer engagement and maximizing employee productivity through measurement tools, coursework, and strategic advisory services. Gallup's 2,000 professionals deliver services at client organizations, through the Web, at Gallup University's campuses, and in 40 offices around the world. For more information go to www.gallup.com.

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