

# Leading the Physical and Financial Health

By Kevin Smith  
Staff Writer

**S**unday, December 26, 2004 - WHITTIER — Steven Cortez takes physical fitness seriously.

A recent graduate of Cal State Fullerton, he is a certified athletic trainer and a certified strength and conditioning specialist.

He also has worked with several sport teams at the Division 1 level of college in addition to serving as a minor league athletic trainer for the Anaheim Angels.

Now the 24-year-old Whittier resident, who graduated Jan. 5 with a bachelor of science and kinesiology degree, is drawing upon his real-world experience and knowledge to help save employers money.

**CORTEX Human Performance Consulting** is Cortez' new company, and he said he figures it offers a much needed service for companies looking to cut costs.

"My aim is toward local businesses that want to lower their health-care and workers' compensation costs," he explained. "My services include going to businesses one to four times per month and helping employees with their fitness needs as well as worker's comp issues."

Cortez said his service is designed as a preventive measure.

"If an employee is coming off workers' comp but feels he didn't get enough rehabilitation, I would help him by instructing him on how to continue rehabilitating his injury," he said. "I can show him exercises and other ways of getting his injury better."

The goal, Cortez said, is to keep more workers on the job and have fewer employ-



ees falling back into the workers' comp system, which hikes health-care costs significantly for employers.

Jack Kyser, senior vice president and chief economist for the **Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.**, said Cortez has tapped into a growing trend.

"What you are seeing is more companies getting involved in their employees' well being," Kyser said. "If employees are a little overweight or have other health issues, you can promote a more healthy lifestyle and that will cut down on medical benefits claims."

Cate Brennan Lisak, a spokeswoman for the **National Athletic Trainers' Association**, said her organization has about 1,500 members who work in the occupational and industrial fields.

"Ten years ago there were fewer athletic trainers, but companies have come to realize they can save a lot of money," she said.

"Athletic trainers generally have good results with workplace clients because they are used to working with athletes and

strive to achieve 100-percent rehabilitation," Lisak said.

"They tend to be more aggressive in their training ... they tend to push patients a little harder," she said.

A 2003 survey by the NATA helps substantiate long-standing anecdotal evidence that on-site occupational athletic training programs add value to a corporation. Some highlights are included below:

- 100 percent of companies report that a certified athletic trainer provides a positive return on investment
- 30 percent of companies polled reported that their return on investment for every dollar was at least \$7.
- 83 percent indicated their return on investment was more than \$3.
- 94 percent of companies indicated the severity of injuries in their workplace decreased by at least 25 percent.

Cortez says he's approached about 40 companies and drawn interest from four.

"In one to two years, I'd like to move into an office and hire a couple people to help me out," he said. "Eventually, I'd also like to open a facility where workers could go in between (my) visits."

Businesses wishing to contact **CORTEX Human Performance Consulting** can call (562) 631-7064.

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#### About the NATA:

Certified athletic trainers (ATCs) are unique health care providers who specialize in the prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and illnesses that occur to athletes and the physically active. The National Athletic Trainers' Association represents and supports the 30,000 members of the athletic training profession through education and research. [www.nata.org](http://www.nata.org). NATA, 2952 Stemmons Freeway, Ste. 200, Dallas, TX 75247, 214.637.6282; 214.637.2206 (fax).