



# spotlight on health

## Can Workwear Make You Sick?

(NAPSA)—According to studies conducted by Professor Charles Gerba, a noted microbiologist and clean water expert at the University of Arizona, anyone who wears clothing to work that has been laundered in a home washer with other soiled items risks potentially harmful effects to his or her health.

Gerba found that 95 percent of home launderers today use cold water in order to save energy, as well as wear and tear on their clothing. Unfortunately, cold water allows germs and viruses that can be found on soiled clothing to spread throughout a wash load. And for anyone who handles or wears such “washed” apparel, even after it emerges from a hot dryer, those microbes can manifest their presence in the form of upset stomachs, diarrhea and skin infections. What’s more, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has found that the potential health threats involved in washing workwear at home can extend beyond microbes. NIOSH has documented cases in 28 countries and 36 U.S. states where workers were unwittingly transporting toxins away from work sites and into their homes, consequently exposing other family members to the contaminants.

Ensuring workwear is clean of invisible microbes or toxins calls for careful handling and separation of all workwear and—when ever applicable—turning up wash-water temperatures, says Robert Isaacson, Director of Marketing for UniFirst Corporation, a leading supplier of uniforms and work



### **Germ-Free Workwear—Uniform service programs help keep employees healthy.**

apparel to companies throughout the U.S. and Canada. “Still another alternative,” Isaacson says, “is to turn the entire burden over to professional uniform service providers who sort work clothing by type and soil levels, and then use proven computerized washing and drying formulas to deliver effectively laundered apparel.”

An added feature of managed uniform programs, Isaacson says, is that they’ve been shown to boost business images and save employers money over time. “As a result, it’s quite understandable why the uniform service industry has been growing at rates well above most others.”

UniFirst provides a range of uniforms, work apparel and facility services to nearly 200,000 business customers. For more information, call (800) 225-3364 or visit [www.unifirst.com](http://www.unifirst.com).