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NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Three organizations honored with the Governor's Wellness Award and a Chadron woman receives Leading Light Award at virtual safety & wellness conference

Three organizations were honored with the Governor's Wellness Award at the Panhandle Business & Employer Safety & Wellness Virtual Conference on Wednesday.

Shelby-Rising City Public Schools received the Sower Award for planting the seeds for wellness at their school. Educational Service Unit #6 and Community Hospital in McCook received the Grower Award for growing the seeds for wellness at their organizations.

"The Governor's Wellness Award recognizes businesses that create an environment and culture for wellness," said Governor Pete Ricketts.

He added, "We appreciate these organizations for thinking innovatively about how they can encourage employees to live healthier lifestyles and think about wellness daily. This tremendously increases enjoyment of life and longevity. Organizations need happy and healthy employees for a productive workforce."

Nichole Hall from ESU #6 noted on the Governor's Monday press briefing, "You know when people stop bringing in donuts and have large bottles of water on their desk, you're making progress!"

"We are proud to coordinate the Governor's Wellness Award and work with organizations to create environments supporting employee health and well-being. They've made marked strides towards the prevention of devastating and costly chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer," said Jessica Davies, Assistant Health Director.

In addition to the Governor's Wellness Awards, the Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council honored the 3rd Leading Light Award in honor of Annie Loutzenhiser, "**for her dedication and leadership to employee health and well-being in the Panhandle.**"

Cheryl Abegglen, a Registered Nurse at Chadron Community Hospital and serves on the Wellness Team, was nominated by her peers for this distinction for being a true leading light. Family, friends, and coworkers shared a surprise video with Abegglen highlighting her

exemplary qualities of leading by example and being an inspiration to so many. The video can be viewed at www.pphd.org/pwwc.html.

“The hospital has received multiple Governor’s Wellness Awards throughout the years, and this is in large part to Cheryl Abegglen. She has been on the wellness committee for over ten years and spearheaded a tobacco-free campus and healthy vending initiative along with many other supports and resources for her fellow employees. She leads by example,” said Diana Lecher, Home Health & Hospice Director.

For additional information about worksite wellness, visit www.pphd.org/pwwc.html or call Davies at 308-487-3600 extension 101. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council is proudly part of Panhandle Public Health District. The Council specializes in supporting employers in the Panhandle region. We recognize that many employers support a diverse and remote workforce and offer innovative ways to overcome the challenge of working with a virtual team. We understand that many of our employers do not have full-time wellness resources and work to provide resources and training to make running a worksite wellness program as easy as possible.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle community.