

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

For more information, contact: Kim Engel at 308-760-2415 or Jessica Davies at 308-760-6492

Panhandle Public Health District featured in report to the White House and Congress

For the last four years the National Prevention Council (NPC) has submitted a report to the White House and relevant committees of Congress describing national progress in meeting specific prevention, health promotion, and public health goals defined in the National Prevention Strategy. Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) is honored to be selected as a featured story with a handful of other departments and agencies across the nation.

“PPHD is working to empower Panhandle residents to have the knowledge, ability, resources, and motivation to make healthy choices,” said PPHD Director, Kim Engel.

The Community Health Improvement Plan for the Panhandle focuses the four priority areas of healthy living, cancer prevention, injury and violence prevention, and mental and emotional well-being. The majority of strategies in the plan focus on creating supportive environments in worksites, schools, and child care centers.

The NPC feature highlights Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council, a collaboration between PPHD and Scotts Bluff County Health Department. The council reaches roughly three dozen employers and serves as a conduit to enhance policies, systems, and environmental supports in the workplace so that the healthy choice becomes the easy choice.

“The majority of people spend about 40 hours a week at work. We want to create environments conducive for healthy behaviors,” said Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council Coordinator, Jessica Davies. She added, “One in five employed persons in the Panhandle benefits from the implementation of a variety of these worksite wellness initiatives and we are excited to see that number grow.”

Healthy Eating:

- Offering water and diet juices in company refrigerators
- Adopting healthy meeting guidelines to increase fruit and veggie offerings
- Providing a room, refrigeration, and time for breastfeeding mothers to express their milk

Physical Activity:

- Using break time for physical activity
- Providing walking workstations

Injury and Violence Free Living:

- Implementing distracted driving policies

Mental and Emotional Well-Being:

- Creating flextime policies to better balance personal and work obligations

Clinical and Community Preventive Services:

- Hosting evidence-based programs like National Diabetes Prevention Program directly on site

Tobacco Free Living:

- Establishing tobacco-free campuses

Acting Surgeon General Boris Lushniak, MD, shared his excitement about the success stories in the report. “I am thrilled by this progress. We are truly working together to shift the Nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and health. In the process, we are demonstrating the value of prevention approaches that involve diverse sectors of our society working towards common goals,” he said.

The full report and additional information about the council can be viewed at www.pphd.org/pwwc.html or contacting Davies at 308-487-3600 extension 101. The council offers extensive membership benefits to help build evidence-based worksite wellness initiatives for local organizations.

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.