

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Four Panhandle businesses were honored by the Governor and Chief Medical Officer for sowing the seeds for wellness at the recent Panhandle Safety & Wellness Conference in Gering. Bayard Public Schools, City of Chadron, Northwest Community Action Partnership, and Sidney Regional Medical Center all received the Governor's Wellness Award at the Sower Level.

Since the award was created seven years ago, over 250 businesses throughout the state have received it-50 in 2014 alone. Governor Heineman and Dr. Acierno thanked the recipients for their leadership and relayed the importance of worksite wellness to conference attendees as a key strategy to control health care costs and maintain a vibrant economy.

City of Chadron has a diverse wellness committee comprised of representatives from each city department and has held a variety of wellness initiatives with the pedometer challenge having the strongest participation. Employees planted and cared for a pumpkin patch in the community garden and funds raised were donated to the Shop with a Cop program. The city recently adopted policy supporting breastfeeding mothers and created a private, comfortable space for use at two of their facilities. The second annual health fair saw a 63% participation increase.

Northwest Community Action Partnership (NCAP) encourages employees to be at their best to serve clients by exemplifying good choices and being role models for the healthy values they advocate at work and at home. The National Diabetes Prevention Program, offered as a benefit through the Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council, has had an exciting impact for employees and the group is still active and meeting monthly.

NCAP adopted healthy meeting guidelines for all company-sponsored functions with Jennifer Sorensen, HR Director stating, "We anticipated resistance on not serving pizza or donuts at meetings but the change has been well-received overall!" She added, "We have been excited with the results of our wellness program, our mental wellness score has increased by 7% in the past year."

Sidney Regional Medical Center (SRMC) has devised a pay as you workout program to encourage employees to use their fitness membership benefit. Marketing Director Evy Parsons shared, "Employees are paid \$5 for each 30 minute gym visit up to three times a week or a \$15 total payout which has worked to increase physical activity levels."

SRMC Employee Health Nurse, Tammie Brunkow, has worked diligently to increase nutritious offerings through the cafeteria, vending, and company-sponsored functions relaying, "Our Nutrition Services team provides at least half low-fat and healthier items in our café along with readily cut-up fresh fruits and veggies for employees to grab-and-go."

Worksite Wellness Coordinator Jessica Davies touted, “We are so proud of each of these organizations for their commitment to employee health. They are certainly leaders in the region and we commend them for all of their work.”

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 a division of Panhandle Public Health District in partnership with Scotts Bluff County Health Department. 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.