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**Wellness Without Borders: Vermont Worksite Wellness Conference**

*Governor Phil Scott and Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD  
present employer wellness awards*

BURLINGTON – A capacity crowd of employers, business leaders, wellness experts and human resource professionals attended Vermont's annual Worksite Wellness conference held at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in South Burlington.

Governor Phil Scott, Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, and Janet Franz, chair of the Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, kicked off the sold-out conference, which features awards presented by the governor to 90 employers that have demonstrated excellence in worksite wellness.

Affirming that "having the right attitude about your health is important," Governor Scott expressed his appreciation to the attendees for their commitment to forward-thinking wellness policies that benefit employees and employers alike. "Your dedication to creating a culture of wellbeing makes Vermont a great place to live and work."

This year's conference theme, "Wellness Without Borders" reflects the connection health and wellness have in all aspects of our lives. "Worksite wellness programs are integral to improving

the health and wellbeing of Vermonters, and are a critical component of our 3-4-50 chronic disease initiative,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD.

“A majority of Vermonters spend half their waking hours on the job, which means that employers are key players in helping create a comprehensive approach to health,” said Dr. Levine. “We know that environments that promote physical activity, healthy food choices and tobacco cessation help to reduce chronic disease factors and support the mental and emotional health of employees.” Dr. Levine said the record number of conferees speaks to how employers understand that policies to help improve employee health also lead to financial benefits, reduced health care costs and absenteeism, and a more productive and engaged workforce.

Nearly 500 individuals and employers attended the conference awards and workshops. The event featured a keynote address by [Eric Karpinski](#), corporate trainer and founder of *The Science of Happiness* program, about how happiness can improve engagement, innovation and work performance.

Ninety employers received Governor’s Excellence in Worksite Wellness Awards, and another nine were presented with Rising Star Awards. Awardees represented workplaces with a wide range in employee numbers, from the Springfield Area Parent Child Center to PC Construction Company. “Each of the employers have met a standard of excellence for worksite wellness programs,” said Janet Franz of the Vermont Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. “Effective wellness programs take effort and commitment, and it’s important to acknowledge and thank these employers for promoting a healthy environment.”

Win Smith, principle owner and president of Sugarbush Resort, received the 2017 Vermont Wellness Leadership Award. Win was recognized for being a champion for healthy, active lifestyles among the resort’s employees and residents of the Mad River Valley. “Win sets a strong example for business leaders in sustaining a culture of wellbeing,” said Franz.

### **About the Worksite Wellness Conference**

The annual Worksite Wellness Conference and workshops give Vermont employers and wellness professionals an opportunity to share ideas for inspiring and enabling employees to make healthy choices both on and off the job. Workshops dive deeper into a variety of subjects, such as physical activity and nutrition in the workplace, employee engagement, and stress reduction.

The conference is presented by the Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports and the Vermont Department of Health, with co-sponsors BlueCross and BlueShield of Vermont, Cigna, Go! Vermont, Invest EAP, Northeast Delta Dental, Northwestern Medical Center, The Richards Group, and University of Vermont Medical Center.

**For a list of awardees**, view the [Worksite Wellness Conference program](#) at healthvermont.gov.

To learn more about the Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, visit [vermontfitness.org](http://vermontfitness.org)

For more information and employer resources about Worksite Wellness in Vermont, visit <http://healthvermont.gov/wellness/physical-activity-nutrition/workplace>

Visit [3-4-50 Vermont](#) to learn about how physical activity and wellness are key components to preventing chronic disease.

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