



MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KCHD partners with East Tennessee Wellness Roundtable to recognize healthy worksites

Knoxville, Tenn. – The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) and East Tennessee Wellness Roundtable (ETWR) recognized five employers today with gold status for exemplifying excellence in worksite wellness. An annual recognition, the gold status recognizes employers who demonstrate a supportive wellness infrastructure and meet criteria related to disease monitoring and prevention, including the promotion of physical activity, nutrition, breastfeeding and mental health, as well as the prevention of substance misuse and tobacco use.

“Bottom line, a healthy workforce is a productive workforce,” said KCHD Registered Dietitian and ETWR Chair Chelsea Johnson. “Evidence shows that effective worksite wellness programs not only lead to healthier employees, but they also increase workforce productivity while reducing absenteeism, employee turnover and health insurance costs for the employer.”

The 2019 ETWR Gold worksites include:

- Cannon and Cannon, Inc., a consulting engineering and field surveying company with 48 employees in the Knoxville area
- DWK Life Sciences, a manufacturer of glassware, laboratory consumables and specialty products for life sciences with 350 employees in the Knoxville area
- EXEDY America Corporation, a manufacturer of motor vehicle parts with 450 employees in the Knoxville area
- Pilot Flying J, the largest operator of Travel Centers in North America, with 2,500 employees in the Knoxville area
- Radio Systems Corporation, a global supplier of pet products headquartered in Knoxville with 422 employees in this area

Through the gold awards program, worksites can apply for supplies that support worksite wellness initiatives, such as blood pressure monitoring cuffs, exercise equipment and lactation room supplies. These resources are provided by the Tennessee Department of Health through the Project Diabetes grant, of which KCHD is a recipient. The Project Diabetes grant is focused on reducing the number of Tennesseans who are considered overweight or obese. Over the past three years, 27 worksites have achieved ETWR gold status. To view past recipients, visit <http://etwellness.org/etwr-gold-recipients/>.

Approximately 69 percent of Knox County adults are considered overweight or obese, 33 percent have hypertension, and 14 percent have diabetes. According to the American Heart Association, obesity-related absenteeism costs U.S. employers \$11.1 billion per year, hypertension \$10.3 billion and diabetes \$20 billion. Numerous studies have estimated sizable health care savings from worksite wellness efforts. Citibank’s health management program reported an estimated savings of \$4.50 in health care expenditures per every dollar spent on employee wellness.

The average U.S. citizen spends 90,000 hours in the workplace during their lifetime. With most of the population employed and spending a significant amount of time at work, worksite wellness programs are an important component in improving population health.

ETWR is a member-based collaboration of wellness professionals and has more than 140 members whose common goal is to cultivate healthier worksites. Local worksites interested in workplace well-being are encouraged to attend meetings featuring topics such as chronic disease prevention and management, stress management, financial wellness, and current well-being trends. As a part of KCHD's worksite wellness community initiatives, the organization helps facilitate ETWR and has staff who serve in leadership roles with the organization.

About Knox County Health Department

As the first health department in Tennessee to achieve national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. KCHD investigates disease outbreaks, identifies community health threats, conducts extensive outreach and education, provides and connects the public with medical care, prepares for public health emergencies, enforces food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

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