

**Well Workplace Award  
Executive Summary**

**Rhode Island  
Department Of Health  
Gold Award**

Information in this publication is carefully reviewed for accuracy. Questions, comments, or ideas are welcome. Please direct to Dr. David Hunnicutt, Executive Editor, at the address below.

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## General Information

### WELL WORKPLACE

*2004 Gold Application*

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#### Basic Information

Name of Organization Rhode Island Department of Health

Address of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Council Affiliation Wellness Council of Rhode Island

Contact Person Edna Poulin

Title Chief, Worksite Wellness

Work Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Contact Paula Pullano, \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Organization State of Rhode Island

Number of Sites Covered by this Application 2

Number of Employees Covered by this Application 478

Nature of Business or Industry Public Health

Name of CEO Patricia M. Nolan, MD, MPH

Date of Application June 14, 2004

## PREFACE: NARRATIVE

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The Rhode Island Department of Health's (HEALTH) commitment to health promotion grew out of its responsibilities under the 1974 National Health Planning & Resources Development Act. HEALTH fully appreciates the importance of the worksite channel for health promotion and disease prevention. Working people spend most of their awake hours at the worksite. Since the key to health promotion and disease prevention in the Year 2004 in the United States of America is lifestyle change, HEALTH understands that it must 'walk the walk,' as well as 'talk the talk.'

In 1980, HEALTH organized an Office of Health Promotion, which took the lead on both internal and external health promotion initiatives. In the beginning internal initiatives included "*Take the Stairs – It is Healthier*" campaign, employee health fairs, "*Any Wednesday*" brown bag lunch health education program, and exercise classes.

In 1991, HEALTH organized a Health & Safety Committee, which was chaired by Marie Stoeckel, Chief of the Office of Occupational & Radiological Health, from 1995 to 2001. At the present time, the Committee is Co-Chaired by Edward D'Arezzo and Donna Costantino of Human Resources. The committee was created for the purpose of analyzing health and safety issues in HEALTH and making appropriate recommendations to the Director of Health. Since HEALTH consists of two different buildings located on the same campus, each with different safety and occupational health issues, a subcommittee for HEALTH's laboratory building was also created. This subcommittee meets independently and its chairperson reports to the full committee. The Health & Safety committee's accomplishments include a Laboratory Safety Manual, a Chemical Hygiene Plan, a Fire Evacuation Plan, and a Bloodborne Pathogens Plan.

The original Health & Safety Committee was later renamed the Occupational Health & Safety Committee and is now primarily responsible for conducting inspections, developing policies, and conducting training programs related to the occupational health and safety of the work environment

and work processes. These activities complement the overall health promotion programs performed by the Worksite Health committee.

HEALTH began its *Worksite Wellness Program* as part of its commitment to encourage healthy lifestyles amongst its employees. The internal Worksite Health Committee was formed to provide for broad departmental participation in the *Worksite Wellness Program*. Its mission was, and continues to be, to develop and implement health promotion and risk reduction programs and activities for HEALTH employees.

In order to protect and promote the health of its employees and to provide positive leadership in the State of Rhode Island, HEALTH is committed to conducting and promoting high priority health risk appraisal and health risk reduction programs amongst its own employees and for the community at-large such as businesses, minority health promotion centers and schools. HEALTH's commitment to Worksite Health starts at the top of the organization and includes all levels of management.

Responsibility for the *Worksite Wellness Program* within the Rhode Island Department of Health is located in the Office of the Director, Patricia A. Nolan, M.D., M.P.H. Within the Director's Office, the Deputy Director, William J. Waters, Jr., Ph.D, champions Worksite Health. Both the Director and the Deputy Director are very supportive of the *Worksite Wellness Program*. The rationale for this administrative location is to provide for clear senior management support and department wide coordination of activities. The Director's Office recognizes this program as a high priority for employee health and safety.

HEALTH also has a strong working relationship with the Worksite Wellness Council of Rhode Island (WWCRI). In fact, HEALTH initiated the formation of WWCRI and has provided the staff support for WWCRI since its inception. HEALTH is committed not only to protecting and promoting the health of its own employees but also, all the employees in the State of Rhode Island. HEALTH's

staff support of WWCRI is an essential ingredient in the success of that organization, the first Worksite Wellness Council in New England!

The current functions of the *Worksite Wellness Program* in HEALTH are to provide employees with a vehicle to influence program development; ensure that activities meet employee needs; and implement health promotion and disease prevention programs through health education and information, behavior modification programs, disease screenings, policy changes, professional development, improved and enhanced work environments, and through employee assistance programs.

One has to look no further than Health's mission and vision statements to see its commitment to health and safety.

The mission statement of The Rhode Island Department of Health:

***To prevent disease and to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of Rhode Island.***

The vision statement of The Rhode Island Department of Health:

***All people in Rhode Island will have the opportunity to live safe and healthy lives in safe and healthy communities.***

The mission statement of The Rhode Island Department of Health's Worksite Wellness Program:

***To develop and implement health promotion and risk reduction programs and activities that target health risks and promote healthier lives for HEALTH employees.***