

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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SEARHC earns WELCOA Well Workplace Award

SITKA, May 20, 2008 — Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA) this month announced the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) earned a Gold level Well Workplace Award for 2008.

In order to win a Well Workplace Award from WELCOA, organizations must meet seven benchmarks — capture senior level support, create cohesive wellness teams, collect data to drive health efforts, craft an operating plan, choose appropriate interventions, create a supportive environment, and consistently evaluate outcomes.

“My vision is for the entire staff to be supported in reaching their highest level of health and wellness,” SEARHC President/CEO Roald Helgesen wrote in SEARHC’s application for the award. “My wish is to recognize the staff contribution and that they are satisfied and fulfilled while working to meet our important mission.”

“Good companies know that their employees are their most valuable asset. Great companies, however, go beyond surface recognition by taking care of their employees. SEARHC has made a tremendous commitment to its employees.” says David Hunnicutt, President of Wellness Councils of America. “SEARHC has created an enormously supportive environment and adopted policies that support its employees’ efforts to reduce their health risks — improving overall health and well-being.”

SEARHC is believed to be the first organization from Alaska to win one of WELCOA’s prestigious Well Workplace Awards. The WELCOA site, <http://www.welcoa.org>, posts award winners dating back to 2005, and no Alaska firms are among the recipients. The Well Workplace Awards have been awarded since 1991, and WELCOA Membership Director David Steurer said he is not aware of any previous Alaska winners. There are five levels of the Well Workplace Awards — Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze and Small Business — and 124 total awards were made in 2007 (the figure was not available for 2008).

“This is great news for SEARHC,” say Doug Osborne and Lisa Sadleir-Hart, health educators who lead the SEARHC Employee Wellness Team. “In the past several years it’s been great to see how the employee wellness program has grown and to get confirmation that we are not only meeting, but oftentimes exceeding, the national benchmarks.”

SEARHC is a non-profit tribal health consortium of 18 Alaska Native communities that provides medical, dental, behavioral health, substance abuse treatment and wellness services to the Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian and other Native American people who reside in Southeast Alaska. SEARHC is one of the oldest and largest Native-run health organizations in the country, providing services to approximately 18,000 individuals living in remote communities across a region the size of Florida.

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