



(Fit-Friendly Worksites Program Release – Platinum)

NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:

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**Ozaukee County Recognized as an
American Heart Association Fit-Friendly Worksite**

Worksites take steps to decrease healthcare expenses, increase productivity

Port Washington, 6/12/15 – Ozaukee County has been recognized as a Platinum-Level Fit-Friendly Worksite by the American Heart Association for helping employees eat better and move more.

“Physical activity and employee wellness are important priorities at Ozaukee County. We are honored and excited to be recognized by the American Heart Association as a Platinum-Level Fit-Friendly Worksite,” Jason Dzwinel. “We’re committed to providing the best workplace environment possible. This will benefit our employees’ health and produce even more positive results for our worksite overall.”

Platinum-level employers:

- Offer employees physical activity options in the workplace.
- Increase healthy eating options at the worksite.
- Promote a wellness culture in the workplace.
- Implement at least nine criteria outlined by the American Heart Association in the areas of physical activity, nutrition and culture.
- Demonstrate measurable outcomes related to workplace wellness.

Ozaukee County offers several physical activity challenges, such as walking and biking challenges, to foster and promote the importance of being active. The County also encourages employees to get up from their desk, stretch their legs, and take a wellness walking break each day. In addition, this

past year the County offered a ‘Biggest Loser’ challenge. Employees who chose to participate could form teams and by the end of the challenge period the team that lost the most weight won.

On top of Ozaukee County’s continuous wellness programing, the County opened its first ever employee clinic dubbed “Oz Health.” The County’s clinic provides employees on the county’s health insurance and their families with a wide range of services focused on health and wellness, including treatment for illnesses and injuries, exams, labs, immunizations, and other preventive services. Ozaukee County employees are now empowered more now than ever to take proactive role in their wellness and become healthier today.

The Fit-Friendly Worksites program is a catalyst for positive change in the American workforce by helping worksites make their employees’ health and well-being a priority.

American employers are losing an estimated \$225.8 billion a year because of healthcare expenses and health-related losses in productivity, and those numbers are rising. Many American adults spend most of their waking hours at sedentary jobs. Their lack of regular physical activity raises their risk for a host of medical problems, such as obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes. Employers face \$12.7 billion in annual medical expenses due to obesity alone. The American Heart Association is working to change corporate cultures by motivating employees to start walking, which has the lowest dropout rate of any physical activity.

Recognition is a critical component of the Fit-Friendly Worksites program. Employers that join this program qualify for official recognition by the American Heart Association. They are listed on the program’s national website, as well as Ozaukee County’s website, and at community wide events hosted by the County. Qualifying worksites also have the right to use the program’s annual recognition seal for internal communications and with external, recruitment-related communications.

“The Fit-Friendly Worksites Program offers easy-to-implement ways for organizations to help employees eat better and move more, which will help improve their health – and their employer’s bottom line,” said Jason Dzwinel. “Even people who haven’t exercised regularly until middle age can reap significant benefits by starting a walking program. A study published in 1986 in the New England Journal of Medicine found that some adults may gain two hours of life expectancy for every hour of regular, vigorous exercise they performed.”

For more information about the Fit-Friendly Worksites program and how it’s helping to improve the health of Americans by focusing on the workplace, call **312-476-6685** or visit heart.org/worksitewellness.

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About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is devoted to building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Our mission drives everything we do. To improve the lives of all Americans, we provide public health education in a variety of ways. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or join us, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or any of our offices around the country, or visit heart.org.