

Mammoth Hospital receives the California Fit Business Award



Dawn Smith (front, 3rd from left) Wellness Challenge Coordinator receives Fit Business Award from Senator Torlakson.

On July 21, 2005, Mammoth Hospital, along with the Dole Food Company (West Lake Village), USAA Financial (Sacramento), Monterey County Health Department (Salinas), Community Resource Project, Inc (Sacramento), and NutriFit (Los Angeles), was recognized by the California Task Force on Youth and Workplace Wellness for their dedication to employee health and wellness through the California Fit Business Award.

Winners were selected based on priority, given to worksites that emphasized employee health at the workplace, including the presence of healthy food service options; employer provided time, space and support for physical activity during the work day; CEO/management support; and worksite policies for providing health promotion programs during company time (other than the lunch hour). More than 50 employers across the state applied for this year's award. "In addition to caring for the sick and injured, a big part of the mission of the Southern Mono Healthcare District and Mammoth Hospital is to promote health and wellness in our community. Our employee Wellness Program has given us the ideal opportunity to model healthy behaviors for the residents and visitors of our resort community. Our patients know that we 'walk the talk' when it comes to fitness, weight control, and leading a healthy lifestyle," stated Gary Myers, Chief Executive Officer.

Mammoth Hospital has designed a Wellness Challenge Program for their employees to enhance their personal health and wellness. The Wellness Program involves mandatory and optional criteria that employees complete over the course of a year. The mandatory criteria include attending the Wellness Challenge orientation, completing a health survey, a blood pressure screening, a cholesterol screening, a nutrition class, an exercise class, completing at least one yearly goal, and wearing a seat belt every time one is in a car.

The employees who complete the first five mandatory criteria are eligible for a 50% discount at a local gym. A sample of the optional criteria include turning in a monthly goal, keeping a physical activity log, joining a weight loss program, attending four hours of wellness education classes, joining a smoking cessation group, or joining a walking club. The hospital provides monetary incentives to employees who complete the different levels of mandatory and optional criteria.

“Employers like Mammoth Hospital are setting the standard for others to follow to help fight the serious obesity epidemic,” said State Senator Tom Torlakson (D-Antioch), founder and chair of the Task Force. “Providing health and nutrition programs, as well as access to healthy foods and physical activity should be a top priority for employers across the state. We call upon all of California’s employers to make changes in the workplace so that workers have increased access to fruits, vegetables, and physical activity.” Mammoth Hospital also encourages healthy eating throughout the work environment. There are healthy alternatives to choose from in the vending machines. The cafeteria offers a daily calendar of menu items that are healthy. The menu contains three symbols to help employees make healthy choices when eating in the cafeteria. The symbols include a heart symbol for a low-calorie, healthy heart meal, the triangle symbol signifies that portion sizes and side dish options may be high in calories, and the stop sign symbol alerts that the meal is high in fat and should be possibly overlooked.

“It is an honor for Mammoth Hospital to be recognized as a fit business by the California Task Force. We have been doing the Wellness Challenge for three years and there is almost 50% employee participation. We are thankful to have the support of our senior management team who not only encourages the program but are also active members in the program. The program has been successful in helping people make total lifestyle changes such as losing 50 lbs through the weight loss group, dropping cholesterol levels, lowering blood pressure, or getting in shape by joining the walking club. We have seen exciting results from the Wellness Program and are proud of all the participants’ accomplishments,” stated Dawn Smith, Wellness Challenge Coordinator.