

## Groups businesses promote wellness, health

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By Erica Kritt, Times Staff Writer |

Worksite wellness took center stage Wednesday morning at The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County's We're On Our Way Community Forum.

The event is the Partnership's annual opportunity to review the progress the community has made on specific health-related initiatives, and to honor people and organizations in the community who have helped to improve the health of Carroll countians. This year the partnership premiered its latest publication, a worksite wellness resource guide.

"It gives us an additional environment to work in," Tricia Supik, executive director of the Partnership, said.

Supik said working with companies can help reach a large percentage of Carroll's population with health information.

Melissa Murdock and Carol Kolb, co-chairwomen of the Worksite Wellness Action Team, said they both were interested because their employers had worksite wellness initiatives. Murdock is a community educator at Carroll Hospital Center, and Kolb is the department chairwoman for health, fitness and exercise science and director of campus wellness at Carroll Community College.

They explained that by making health education and activities available at work, employers are not just reaching their workforce, but also the community.

They said employees reach out to their families and friends with information.

At the event, the Partnership also recognized companies in Carroll that were already implementing wellness programs with their employees.

New Windsor State Bank took home the first Worksite Wellness Award for its exercise program.

Diane Steckel, the vice president of human resources for New Windsor State Bank, which has six locations in Carroll, was encouraged to start a program while looking for health insurance plans for the company.

The bank got involved with Brick Bodies, a chain of gyms in Baltimore County and city that has a program for businesses.

The employees pay to be in the program, but if at the end of each eight-week session, they have made a measurable improvement, they get their money back, Steckel said.

Steckel said she hasn't had time to calculate how this program has affected the bank's productivity, but she said it's a morale booster.

"We have very sedentary jobs," she said. "I see on a personal level the fun and how everybody encourages each other."

Steckel said that of the bank's 90 employees, about 45 are participating in the initiative.

"I can't come up with a negative," she said of the program.

Both Carroll County Public Schools and the City of Westminster received honorable mentions for their worksite wellness programs.

Upon accepting the award for the City of Westminster, Ron Schroers, the city's director of recreation and parks, commented that

Westminster was able to implement its program inexpensively.

Murdock said worksite wellness can be as small as encouraging employees to take a walk during their lunch break.

"It can be little steps," she said.

The event also honored Tammy Black, executive director of Access Carroll with the Janet W. Neslen Award. Access Carroll provides primary health care to the county's low-income uninsured residents. The award is given to an individual who addresses the issue of access to care in the community.

Carrie Vincent, a Westminster resident who suffered a heart attack in 2007 after the birth of her son, was awarded the Community Champion Award.

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ONLINE

Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County: [www.healthycarroll.org](http://www.healthycarroll.org)

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