



NEWS RELEASE

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Health Promotion Awards program to recognize best in worksite wellness programs

The University of Southern Indiana is beginning a Health Promotion Awards Program to recognize individuals, businesses, and organizations for excellence in worksite health promotion programs. The awards focus on the quality of the program, the impact it has on program participants, and the benefits of the program to the organization it serves. Applications are being accepted through August 20 and the award winners will be announced at the health promotion conference on September 23 at USI. Applicants must complete a 1999 Health Promotion Awards application form available from the USI School of Nursing and Health Professions.

Judi Kuric, the award program organizer and a USI lecturer in nursing and health promotions, said, "Applications will be evaluated on appropriateness of the services provided, the participation level, the program effectiveness, and evidence of quality improvement efforts. Programs may take the shape of awareness education, chronic disease management, health screenings, exercise and fitness, worksite safety and injury prevention, work and family, organization support, or other activities.

Both non profit and for profit organizations are eligible to enter the competition. Organizations are grouped by number of persons eligible for participation. The groupings are up to 50 persons eligible, between 50 and 500 persons eligible, and over 500 persons eligible.

The award program is sponsored by the USI School of Nursing and Health Professions. Guidelines for the awards program were adapted from the Association for Worksite Health Promotion (AWHP), of which USI is a member. According to AWHP, nationally employers devote approximately 95 percent of health benefit expenses to treating illness. Overall health benefit expenses could be significantly decreased by shifting more resources to preventive care and health promotion efforts. Worksite health promotion programs reinforce business efforts aimed at improving worker productivity, effectiveness and controlling costs associated with illness and injury.

Applications will be reviewed by a selection committee composed of Nadine Coudret, dean of the USI School of Nursing and Health Professions; Judy Kuric; Lisa Gish, executive director, Tri State Business Group on Health; Tim Mahoney, coordinator, Southern Indiana Labor Management Forum; and Christina Beaudoin, assistant professor of physical education at USI.

Organizations in Vanderburgh County and throughout the Tri State are eligible to enter the competition.