



October 2, 2020

Dear Wellness Coordinator Awards Committee,

I would like to thank you for nominating Traci Wacker, the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH), Wellness Coordinator for the Wellness Coordinator of the Year Award. I am not surprised at the nomination given all that Traci does to actively promote all aspects of wellness and engage employees in continuous participation. I hope what I share with you about Traci in her role as our Wellness Coordinator will inspire you to select her as the awardee for this honor.

Traci is truly deserving of the Wellness Coordinator of the Year Award for her passion, commitment, and innovation as the CDPH Wellness Coordinator. Before getting to the scoring criteria categories, I want to share more about who Traci is as a person and why she deserves this award.

Traci is new to state government (less than two years), however, she is not new to public service. Traci's first career was educating elementary school children. When Traci retired from teaching she decided to continue her public service and joined state government. Traci joined CDPH in March 2019 as my special assistant. Shortly after Traci started working at CDPH, I asked her if she would help out with the Wellness/Healthier U program since the position was vacant. Traci eagerly and without any hesitation took on some of the Wellness Coordinator duties while maintain her own duties. Traci immediately demonstrated passion and commitment to the program, these same qualities, I imagine, she exhibited throughout her teaching career. Traci's ability to connect with people individually and collectively is truly a gift that enables her to establish solid partnerships, engage wellness volunteers, ambassadors, and employees in a way that significantly enhances our wellness program and increases participation. Traci is passionate about all aspects of wellness for herself, her family, and our employees.

Officially, Traci has been serving as our Wellness Coordinator for just over a year now (unofficially a year and a half). Over the last year, she expanded the focus of the program to include providing more information about the employee assistance program (on behalf of our HR Division), volunteered and became a member of the CDPH Disability Advisory Committee in November 2019, to promote and offer resources and events to our employees with disabilities (ensuring all online wellness information is ADA compliant), and graciously took over the coordination of the quarterly blood drives when another CDPH office no longer wanted the responsibility. As part of her role as the blood drive coordinator, Traci's promotion and enthusiasm for the blood drives has

resulted in CDPH meeting the donor donation goals set by Vitalant each quarter, when blood donations are at an all-time low across the nation due to Covid-19.

Traci works continuously with new and established partners to offer statewide, virtual resources to our 3,000 plus employees, with many of them working remotely from home. She has really focused her efforts on ensuring the availability of not only our regular wellness activities and events in virtual formats but also ensuring resources, webinars, videos and presentations that cover various topics specific to the Covid-19 pandemic including, resilience, coping, working remotely, leading remote teams, 1:1 coaching, and webinars for parents working remotely at home with their children in distance learning. It should be noted that because of CDPH's front line role in the Covid-19 pandemic, our 3,000 plus employees have been significantly impacted by the mass staffing redirections, halting of many critical programs and services, departure of many of our leaders including our Director and Assistant Director, and the new, remote working environment. However, Traci has been able to mitigate the impact to the Wellness/Healthier U program through her established relationships within the Department and with our partners. Over 1,500 of our employees have participated in the Covid-19 focused events over the last 6 months. Additionally, Traci reached out immediately to partners for resources and presentations around social and racial injustice in response to the racial and social injustice highlighted by the killing of George Floyd and many other people of color by law enforcement. These tragic events had tremendous impact on the mental/emotional and social wellbeing of many and Traci recognized the need to provide resources and presentations for our employees. In addition to Traci demonstrating her empathy and flexibility in obtaining relevant wellness resources during these unprecedented times, Traci was also temporarily redirected to assist with COVID-19 work efforts for our Richmond campus and she continued to carry out her Wellness Coordinator duties during that time.

Traci embodies and exemplifies the role of a wellness coordinator by educating and inspiring our employees in all aspects of wellness including physical, mental/emotional, financial, and social wellbeing. Additionally, Traci strives to exceed in all the scoring criteria categories as outlined on the following pages.

Executive Leadership Engagement

- Regular 1:1's with Healthier U Executive Sponsor and leadership to discuss Healthier U status/plans.
- Re-established and co-facilitated bi-annual CDPH/DHCS Partnership Meetings with Beth Gelender. Attendees include DHCS & CDPH Executive Sponsors, CalHR, SEIU
- Reached out to Chronic Disease Control Branch & Alzheimers Disease Program to partner on marketing for Heart & Stroke Walk & Walk to End Alzheimer's. Created an email blast that went out to their employees.
- Establishing regular attendance across the department in the various offices and centers during their all staff meetings.

Program Leadership

- Facilitates monthly Healthier U Booster (Wellness Ambassador) & Advisory Committee meetings. Conducts continuous brainstorming sessions to get ideas for events. Incorporated virtual meeting formats to accommodate for employees working remotely.
- Provides monthly and quarterly reports to CalHR, CDPH management and executive leadership.
- Initiated and received buy in from the Healthier U team to update the name of Healthier U Boosters to Wellness Ambassadors.
- Maintains the Healthier U Partnership Agreement with DHCS, SEIU, and CalHR.
- Served as a member of the Healthy Eating at Meetings workgroup to establish a policy (still in draft form due to departure of Director).
- Implemented and promoted use of the Healthier U Playbook provided by CalHR.
- Re-established the partnership meetings with CalHR, DHCS, SEIU, and Kaiser Permanente after a significantly lengthy gap due to vacancies of both the CDPH and DHCS wellness coordinator positions.
- Established contacts with other health carriers, partners, and vendors to provide wellness opportunities and events to CDPH staff. (i.e. EAP, Optum Rx, Western Health Advantage, Alzheimer's Association, Savings Plus, etc., Sac State)
- Established relationships with field offices to partner on wellness events, resources and activities.
- Established field office specific meetings to provide support for wellness events, resources, and activities.
- When emergency remote working was established at CDPH as a result of Covid-19, immediately engaged all wellness partners to ensure resources, presentations and events were converted to virtual formats which increased opportunities for all 3,000 plus employees to participate.
- Arranged for training from CalHR/SEIU on EEC Wellness Ambassador engagement. Healthier U team attended in person engagement training to aid us in utilizing better 1:1 recruitment strategies to get staff involved in Healthier U.

Assessment Tools

Traci uses participation data obtained from Healthier U events, verbal participant feedback, Constant Contact, and Healthier U Connections enrollment reports provided by CalHR, to assess the success of our program. These factors help to guide discussions with the Wellness Ambassadors and Advisory Committee about future resources and events.

For the 2020 Stairwell Challenge, Traci requested and collected stairwell access data to establish baseline data of stairwell usage by employees and to track use during the Stairwell Challenge. This was useful in creating additional marketing and

communication to employees during the event and provided information on ways to increase participation next year.

Traci is in the process of implementing new survey assessment tools via our communication tool Constant Contact and Survey Monkey. It should be noted that CDPH limited surveys going out to employees under previous Directorate leadership. The surveys being developed will assess staff needs and interests and gauge employee satisfaction with the program.

- As of Sept. 4, 2020, CDPH had the highest number of Webinar participation (907 attendees) out of 84 State agencies that have promoted Kaiser Wellness Webinars since April 7, 2020. (Next closest is agency had 797 attendees)
- CDPH enrollment in the Healthier U Connections wellness platform has consistently grown by 2% or more per quarter in the last 4 quarters. (35 new participants since July – 30 from Richmond according to the August enrollment report provided by CalHR Wellness)

Tracking, Evaluation and Results Communication

Traci utilizes a Wellness Tracking Spreadsheet to track key information including events, participation data, wellness team members, points of contact, and supply inventory. Participation information from this sheet is use to develop the OQPA Monthly Activity Report which is provided to executive leadership on a quarterly basis. On a bi-annual basis, Traci submit events and participation information to CalHR Wellness, along with completing a survey of questions about our wellness program. Event results are communicated to employees using the MyCDPH intranet home page, wellness landing page, and wellness spotlight features.

Marketing and Communication

- Collaborates ongoing with the CDPH Internal Communications team to market, promote and communicate all Healthier U activities using flyers, email blasts, My CDPH Intranet (Newslines articles and Hero Gallery) to highlight important information and events. (i.e. Men's Health Month, Vitalant Blood Drives, Take a Break Resources, etc.)
- Collaborated with the OQPA Communications Coordinator to create a weekly Healthier U Constant Contact marketing email to market and promote events. Implemented use of the Constant Contact video feature to share various events and presentations including Kaiser's weekly Mindful Minute 8-week series, along with videos supporting the Heart & Stroke Walk and Walk to End Alzheimer's.
- Healthier U Wellness Presentations to CDPH offices and centers to engage and promote support of Healthier U by managers and participation for all employees.
- Employee Wellness Page & Weekly Healthier U email with links to the following:
 - Webinar opportunities
 - Webinar recordings
 - EAP Self-Care Apps – Links for mental and physical wellness

- Whil.com - Free Wellness platform
- Kaiser Mindful Minute – Meditation & Stretching Videos
- Virtual Field Trip Resources – National and State parks, zoos, and art museums
- CalHope Warmline - 24/7 Emotional Support
- Health Net Health & Wellness at Home series - 5-10 minute wellness lessons
- American Heart Association – Home workouts, Health & Nutrition Resources
- CommunityFit Virtual Workouts
- Annual Selfie with Simmons during Heart Health Month and Stairwell Challenge including stairwell motivation posters and signs to encourage use of the stairwells instead of the elevator.

Activities and Events

- Co-coordinated August 2019 Wellness Fair “Wellness Rocks” at EEC with Beth Gelender of DHCS & Alexa Rabino OQPA Communications Coordinator. Organized volunteer Healthier U staff and interns for the event. Highly successful event with over 30 vendors and 851 employees in attendance (highest ever).
- Established monthly then weekly Wellness Wednesday Tabling Events – Lobbies of CDPH (173/174) – Utilized to support monthly wellness themes (i.e. Oral Health, Sun Safety, Rethink Your Drink), challenges (Strong Body, Strong Mind Activity Passports, Stairwell Challenge) or to provide information and services to staff. (i.e. Savings Plus Q & A)
- Strong Body – Strong Mind Activity Passport Challenge – Adapted DHCS Summer Fun Passport to a healthy activity passport to encourage physical activity, with which staff could complete activities, receive a stamp, and be entered in a drawing for prizes. Utilized Wellness Wednesday tables as check-in location for staff.
- Reached out to EAP to present joint CDPH/DHCS EAP Orientation
- Scheduled Regular Savings Plus presentations – Early to Mid-Career, Social Security, Nearing Retirement, Finance 101
- Took on Blood Drive Coordinator duties for CDPH – partners with Vitalant, CalHR & DGS/Facilities to plan, promote and present recurring blood drives throughout the year. Coordinated the transition from bloodmobile drives to onsite drives due to COVID-19 restrictions, and have onsite drives scheduled through December of 2021. Successfully partnered with CalHR to open drive to participation from other State Agencies.
- Stairwell Challenge – Planned, prepared and presented CDPH 4-week Stairwell Challenge for February’s Heart Month. Stairwell motivational posters, interactive autograph posters, provided Walk the Block option and options for employees with disabilities.

- August 2020 - Coordinated collaboration with Brian Hinton, David Bolognesi, and Johnny Chang (consultants and retirement specialist) to provide Savings Plus 1:1 Consultation Appointments for CDPH/DHCS staff with financial questions – Filled 85 available slots – lots of positive feedback from participants to consultants.

In the unique circumstances resulting from the pandemic, promoted and made the following COVID-19 Specific activities and events available to staff through Constant Contact Marketing, Employee Wellness Page, and enterprise wide communications.

Health Plan Partners & Other Partners

- Kaiser: Coping with Covid-19 Webinar
- Healthy Eating During Shelter in Place- DHCS/CalHR
- Kaiser Webinar: Mindful Stretching (2)
- UHC Webinar: How to Support Mental Health Concerns in the Workplace
- EAP Webinar: Mental Health First Aid: An Overview
- Kaiser Webinar: Laughter is the Best Medicine
- Health Net Webinar: Keeping Your Lungs Healthy
- Destination Health: Addressing Societal Trauma
- Kaiser Webinar: Coping with Covid-19 and Beyond
- EAP Webinar: The Life-Altering Effects of Practicing Mindful Self-Compassion
- Kaiser Webinar: Updates on the Latest Science - Return to Work
- Health Net Webinar: Return to the Outdoors – The Healing Power of Nature
- Kaiser Webinar: Covid 19 Update - Staged Recovery
- Kaiser Webinar: Integrating Mental & Social Health with Covid-19
- EAP Webinar: A Stress Relief Toolkit – Tips and Tools for Managing Stress
- Health Net Webinar: Acupressure: From Restlessness to Peace of Mind
- Kaiser Covid 19 Webinar: Updates on the Latest Science - Health Disparities and Maternity
- Kaiser Covid 19 Webinar: Updates on the Latest Science- New Testing, Vaccine Development, and Resurgence Precautions for Employers
- Kaiser Webinar: Coping Skills for Caregivers
- Kaiser Covid-19 Webinar: Updates on the Latest Science- Back to School Safety & FAQ
- Health Net Webinar: Weathering the Winter
- Kaiser Webinar: Surviving Distance Learning
- Kaiser Covid -19 Webinar: Updates on the Latest Science- Focus on Seniors
- Kaiser Covid-19 Webinar: Updates on the Latest Science- The Flu & Supporting Caregivers
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Webinar: Talk Saves Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention
- Western Health Advantage: Building Resilience for Wellbeing
- Kaiser Covid-19 Webinar: Updates on the Latest Science-Vaccine Updates, Mental Health, and Diseases of Despair

- My CDPH Newsline Article with resources: The Importance of Taking Time Off During COVID-19
- Rewind Your Life 30-Day Challenge – Emotional Wellbeing through interaction with nature
- Employee Wellness Page & Weekly Healthier U Constant Contact email with links to the following:
 - Webinar opportunities
 - Webinar recordings
 - EAP Self-Care Apps – Links for mental and physical wellness
 - Whil.com - Free Wellness platform
 - Kaiser Mindful Minute – Meditation & Stretching Videos
 - Virtual Field Trip Resources – National and State parks, zoos, and art museums
 - CalHope Warmline - 24/7 Emotional Support
 - Health Net Health & Wellness at Home series - 5-10 minute wellness lessons
 - American Heart Association – Home workouts, Health & Nutrition Resources
 - CommunityFit Virtual Workouts

Social and Racial Injustice

- Mental Health America of California brochure with resources for the African American community (attached)
- Creating Space for Race-Based Discussions in the Workplace Webcast presented by The Conference Board. (attached email)
- Library of Congress National Book Festival, *Hear You, Hear Me – Conversations on Race in America* (Recordings linked here: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/national-book-festival/videos/national-book-festival-presents-videos/>)
- Link to CalHR class: *Ethical Decision Making: Tools and Techniques to Decrease Bias and Make Better Decisions*

34 Strong Partner

- Leading Strong in Times of Uncertainty 1:1 Coaching for Managers/Supervisors covering a variety of topics including:
 - Develop the Skill to Individualize Your Approach with Your Team
 - Develop the Skill of Integrity and Build Trust in Times of Uncertainty
 - Develop the Skill to Increase Your Influence and Help Your Team to Achieve the Outcomes You Need to See
 - Develop the Skill to Grow Inspiration Which is Essential in a Season of Challenges and Changes
 - Develop the Skill to be More Inclusive and Build a Strong and Resilient Team
 - Develop the Skill to Increase Your Investment in Your Team and Communicate Value and Build Trust in Stressful Situations

- Develop the Skill to be Innovative and Get the Best From Your Team and Strengthen Team Resolve
- Develop the Skill to be Intentional with Your Effort and Align Your Team Toward Transformational Outcomes
- Develop the Skill to Grow an Interdependent Team That Will Serve One Another and Endure Challenges and Stress
- Develop the Skill to Become More Emotionally Intelligent and Lead the Way Through Crisis
- Develop the Skill to be Intuitive and Learn to Read the Situation and People and Make Positive and Powerful Choices
- Develop the Skill to Grow Your Intellect and Manage Strong In Times of Change and Transition
- Your Topic of Choice
- Open Enrollment 1:1 Resilience Coaching for all Staff
- Open Enrollment 1:1 Resilience Coaching for Parents
- Leading Strong in times of Uncertainty Webinar Series for Managers and Supervisors
- Enhancing Your Virtual Public Speaking Skills Webinar Series for Managers and Supervisors
- Team Building During COVID-19 Transitions for Managers and Supervisors
- Wellbeing in the Workplace Webinar Series for All Staff
- Communication Continuity Through Critical Times Webinar Series All Staff
- Coping Mechanisms for Challenging Moments Webinar Series All Staff
- Leadership Essentials in Advancing Your Career During COVID-19 Webinar Series All Staff
- Resilient Parenting During Critical Times Webinar Series All Staff
- Raising Children in a Chaotic World Webinar Series All Staff
 - Session 1: Love: Providing Unconditional Positive Regard
 - Session 2: Love: Search for Shining Eyes
 - Session 3: Love: Investing In Your Child's Strengths
 - Session 4: Trust: Coaching Your Children
 - Session 5: Trust: Prioritizing Commitments
 - Session 6: Structure: Creating Stability Through Routine
 - Session 7: Structure: Nurturing Self-Regulation
 - Session 8: Correction: Caring Conflict
 - Session 9: Correction: Resolving Problem Behaviors with Love and Strength
 - Session 10: Hope: Building Confidence and Optimism
 - Session 11: Hope: Raising a Resilient Child
 - Session 12: Hope: Finding the Silver Lining

In conclusion, I want to express my appreciation for Traci's own resilience, empathy, and dedication to her role as CDPH's Wellness Coordinator. Since I joined OQPA in 2017, the Wellness Coordinator role has been vacant more than it has been filled until Traci came along. Traci stepped into this role and made it a more comprehensive and inclusive program for all our employees.

Sincerely,

Tara Naisbitt
Deputy Director
Office of Quality Performance & Accreditation
California Department of Public Health

Attachments

- Contact communications screen shot
- Healthier U Partnership Agreement
- Healthier U Playbook
- Marketing flyers
- Participation Reports
- Stairwell Challenge Stairwell Motivation Posters