



NEWS

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2016 Charleston Healthy Business Challenge Kicks Off at City Hall

Charleston Healthy Business Challenge is a free program to encourage and assist Charleston area businesses in establishing work environments that promote a culture of wellness.

Charleston, S.C. (Wednesday, February 2, 2016) – On Wednesday, February 2 at 10:30am in the Council Chambers of Charleston City Hall, SC, Mayor John Tecklenburg, organizers, partners, sponsors and participants gathered to kick off the second annual *Charleston Healthy Business Challenge*, a collaborative program developed by the City of Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina with support from presenting sponsors Arthur J. Gallagher & Company and BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina. The purpose of the program is to encourage and assist businesses and organizations in establishing work environments that promote a culture of wellness. The program opened with remarks by Dr. Susan Johnson, director of health promotion at MUSC who helped develop the program, providing a recap of the first year which ended in December. She then introduced City Councilman Mike Seekings, who has supported this and other wellness initiatives in the Charleston community. "It is amazing to see businesses, large and small, focusing on health and wellness as a core value, and dedicating resources to make Charleston a better place for those who live and work here" said Seekings, Mayor John Tecklenburg added "If your employees are focused on wellness, they are more productive at work. They're more effective. They have a better attitude. It's just great for the community."

The Challenge is free, voluntary and open to all business in the Charleston metropolitan area. Participants register online for access to the Charleston Healthy Business Challenge Scorecard which outlines various actions to take to create a healthier workplace. In 2015, over 350 participants attended Quarterly seminars hosted by MUSC and sponsored by MUSC, Sodexo, Coca-Cola, Prudential and CVS that focused on each of the four pillars of worksite wellness (healthy eating, active living, tobacco-free worksites and stress management) and provided participants with valuable tools and resources to help reach their worksite wellness goals. "We are changing the norm of the workplace environment to one that embraces a culture of wellness as the new standard operating procedure," said Johnson. "By making health a priority at work, we see changes in employees, in their families and in our communities."

Many organizations who participated in the 2015 Challenge were in attendance. Dixie Norris, director of human resources at Kiawah Partners spoke on behalf of her organization and others who received awards for their efforts. She stated that over 300 employees and spouses participated in their wellness program with significant personal health improvements as well as increased productivity and morale. "The Charleston Healthy Business Challenge contributed greatly to the success of the 2015 Kiawah Partner's Employee Wellness Plan by sharing resources to us such as expert educators, local businesses that specialize in wellness, and experienced advisors. The challenge also established goals, which motivated some very positive changes in our environment" said Norris. Paul Wieters, City of Charleston wellness coordinator agreed with Norris, stating that "whether it's the tools available on the website, the local resources and free seminars or sharing of best practices in our local organizations, there is opportunity for everyone to promote a healthier workforce."

Presenting sponsor representatives offered support for the Challenge, encouraging businesses to register and implement new workplace wellness strategies. Eric Rioux with Arthur J. Gallagher & Company asked participating businesses to encourage others and lead by example to help make Charleston the best city live, worship, raise a family and work. According to Mike Harris, vice president of major group sales at BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, helping customers achieve improved health status is a long-term commitment. He said, "There are no quick fixes in this effort. Changing behavior and improving health status is a worthy long-term investment. The payoff is an improved quality of life and mitigation in the rise of health care costs. We hope that our participation again this year signals the seriousness of our intent to play a role in improving the health of customers and our communities."

Registration information for the 2016 Charleston Healthy Business Challenge can be found at www.chbchallenge.com. Invitations to upcoming seminars and networking events will be sent to all participating organizations as well as shared through local media channels. For more information on the Charleston Healthy Business Challenge, contact Dr. Susan Johnson at johnsusa@musc.edu or 843-792-1245.

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About MUSC

Founded in 1824 in Charleston, The Medical University of South Carolina is the oldest medical school in the South. Today, MUSC continues the tradition of excellence in education, research, and patient care. MUSC educates and trains more than 3,000 students and residents, and has nearly 13,000 employees, including approximately 1,500 faculty members. As the largest non-federal employer in Charleston, the university and its affiliates have collective annual budgets in excess of \$1.7 billion. MUSC operates a 750-bed medical center, which includes a nationally recognized Children's Hospital, the Ashley River Tower (cardiovascular, digestive disease, and surgical oncology), and a leading Institute of Psychiatry. For more information on academic information or clinical services, visit www.musc.edu. For more information on hospital patient services, visit www.muschealth.com.