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CHALLENGEWAVE WELLNESS INITIATIVE EXPANDS IN 2013

Innovative health, wellness, and physical activity program builds on success across North Carolina

RALEIGH, N.C., 8 January 2012 – Employees of towns and municipalities across North Carolina are better prepared to keep their New Year's resolutions with the help of an innovative wellness program, ChallengeWave. This health and wellness initiative has been active in Belmont, Kill Devil Hills, Nags Head, Roxboro, and Southport during Phase 1 of 2012. ChallengeWave will expand with Phase 2 starting January 17, 2013 to include Edenton and possibly other municipalities.

"This past year, we saw how much of an impact ChallengeWave could have on the activity level and health of communities across our state," offers ChallengeWave founder Dan Wilson. "An active community is a healthy community, so we work directly with these towns and municipalities to get people to start and stick with healthy habits and regular physical activity. ChallengeWave encourages all kinds of activity habits; walking, jogging, biking, yoga, or even playing the Wii."

Highlighted at the 2011 Emerging Issues Forum as a promising healthcare innovation, as well as being chosen as a finalist for the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina's Health Innovation Challenge in 2012, ChallengeWave is an organization that redefines the use and understanding of incentives by shifting the focus on building community through activity. This unique approach has garnered the attention and support of the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM), and a grant from the Institute for Emerging Issues as a scaleable healthcare innovation.

"We are pleased with the way ChallengeWave has successfully inspired people to make healthier choices together with their friends and neighbors," says Institute for Emerging Issues' Healthcare Policy Manager Sarah Langer. "There is no financial reward for participation as in other health and wellness programs. ChallengeWave takes a different approach and successfully harnesses the more intrinsic motivation, social support, shared goals, team competition and having fun with friends."

ChallengeWave also differentiates itself from other health and wellness programs by allowing the contributions of each individual to help out the team goal regardless of the longevity or level of participation. With no personal campaign, this more open and holistic approach to increasing activity has proven to be both persuasive and effective.

"ChallengeWave's approach shows individuals that every effort they make has an impact and has allowed people to start at their own pace," says Kill Devil Hills town wellness organizer Ron Farley. "Taking into account their own readiness to a change in their activity level, people become more active, and engage with others in their community who are also trying to get healthy. It's not about how fast or far you run, it's that you're out there participating. Even small success builds upon itself."

By tracking various metrics for participants' activities, municipalities compete together against other communities in North Carolina. In the most recent IEI/NCLM campaign, Nags Head stands atop the leader board for miles covered during Q4, yet Roxboro leads in average active days per week. Through competition and community participation, these ChallengeWave participants covered over 5,100 miles and combined for over 1,300 hours of activity in just the final quarter of 2012. With active employees, healthcare costs for municipalities can be reduced while also increasing activity community-wide.

ChallengeWave organizers and participants will be made available to media for further comment or expanded coverage by contacting the Institute for Emerging Issues. Program details, statistics and metrics are also available. Further details about ChallengeWave are available on their website, www.challengewave.com.

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