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R.I. designated nation's first 'Well State'

PROVIDENCE – Rhode Island yesterday was designated the nation's first "Well State" by the Wellness Councils of America. The Worksite Wellness Council of Rhode Island (WWCRI) and Gov. Donald L. Carcieri accepted the award at the State House from WELCOA Chairman Stephen LaCagnin.

"Corporate and government leaders across the nation are realizing that the time has come for wellness in the workplace," LaCagnin said. "Rhode Island certainly has, and you are leading the way. I congratulate you on this great accomplishment."

To be designated a Well State requires that at least 20 percent of a state's work force be employed by organizations that have received WELCOA "Well Workplace" awards.

In Rhode Island, 67 businesses and organizations representing 101,373 employees have achieved that status. Among them is the state government, chosen by WELCOA last year for its successful Get Fit, Rhode Island, initiative ([READ MORE](#)).

"Health and wellness programs based in the workplace benefit everyone, including employers, their employees and their families," said Carcieri, who with First Lady Suzanne Carcieri serves as honorary co-chair of the WWCRI. "This important designation



PBN PHOTO BY STEPHANIE EWENS
 GOV. DONALD L. CARCIERI, honorary chairman of the Worksite Wellness Council of Rhode Island, accepts the Well State award from Stephen LaCagnin, chairman of the board of the Wellness Councils of America.



PBN PHOTO BY STEPHANIE EWENS
 200 EMPLOYEES of Ocean State companies and organizations that have been named Well Workplaces marched from the downtown to the State

demonstrates that Rhode Island has a strong commitment to improving the health of its residents.”

To kick off yesterday’s celebration, more than 200 workers representing Rhode Island organizations that have received Well Workplace awards walked from downtown Providence to the State House grounds.

“Rhode Island business leaders recognize that good health is good business. It is so encouraging to see so many Rhode Island companies promoting and supporting worksite health promotion initiatives,” said WWCRI President Gail M. Davis.

Well Workplace award winners report that, in addition to boosting the health of the work force, worksite wellness programs help reduce absences and boost morale. Some estimate a return on investment of \$2.42 to \$9.85 for each dollar spent.

the Wellness Councils of America, based in Omaha, Neb., is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting healthier lifestyles, especially through worksite-based initiatives. The WWCRI, a WELCOA affiliate formed in 1997, is a nonprofit dedicated to improving the health and safety of working Rhode Islanders. Additional information is available at ri.gov and www.welcoa.

House for the ceremony.

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