



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
OCCUPATIONAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE

Smithsonian Receives 2012 Corporate Health Achievement Award ***Institution's culture of health deemed exemplary***

(Chicago, IL) The Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum and research complex consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, 9 research facilities, and 168 affiliate museums, has received the 2012 Corporate Health Achievement Award (CHAA) from the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM). The Smithsonian received the award because of its exemplary work in integrating its health and safety programs to create a true culture of health.

The Corporate Health Achievement Award (CHAA) recognizes quality occupational and environmental health programs, identifies model programs and outstanding practices with measurable results, and encourages organizational self-assessment and continuous improvement. Recipients of the annual award are judged on the strength of their health and safety programs for individual employees, their comprehensive programs to protect the environment, their strong leadership and management, and for their sustainable efforts to create an overall work culture that emphasizes healthy lifestyles and safety consciousness. Only organizations with the most exemplary health and safety practices are considered for the award.

Composed of nearly 10,000 employees, visiting scientists, research fellows, interns, and volunteers working in several geographic areas both internal and external to the continental U.S., the Smithsonian uses truly cutting-edge programming to achieve results, ranging from its automated injury-reporting system to its use of electronic medical records and medical surveillance. It has a goal of zero injuries and is actively working to achieve this, with commitment from the highest ranks of its leadership – who act as champions of its health programs.

The Smithsonian's strategic plan for fiscal years 2010-2015 includes the reiteration of the key strategy to encourage and maintain an organizational culture that embraces safety, health, and wellness. "When we speak of "a culture of health" we mean "health" in the true sense of the word – a condition in which employees' physical well-being is optimized by the environment and philosophy of the company they work for," said ACOEM President Warner Hudson III, MD. "The Smithsonian exemplifies this approach through its innovative and exemplary health, safety, and environmental programs that seek to maintain and optimize a productive, motivated, and creative workforce, and as such it is entirely fitting that its accomplishments be recognized through the CHAA."

CHAA judges were particularly impressed with how the Smithsonian had integrated traditionally independent health protection and health promotion activities to create a synergy that enhances the overall health and well-being of the Smithsonian workforce, many of whom face unique occupationally challenges. For example, individuals handling the First Ladies dress collection are made aware of the use of arsenic and lead in some of the older dresses and precautionary measure are employed as well as testing of these individuals. Similarly, some of the mineral collections contain arsenic and mercury. In the National Portrait Gallery, there are woodworking shops that construct large shipping cases, usually from hardwoods such as teak and mahogany, to transport priceless exhibits to other museums. Because dust generated from such wood can inflict pulmonary damage, dust scavenging equipment is used to prevent respiratory problems. Across the Smithsonian, employees are trained to handle the various

collections and the chemicals used for restoration, and are under periodic medical surveillance as required by the task.

The Corporate Health Achievement Award was established in 1997 as way of encouraging healthier and safer work environments and recognizes quality occupational and environmental health programs. The ACOEM award program is considered to be the most rigorous and comprehensive of its kind, requiring extensive documentation from companies about their programs and practices and an onsite visit by a team of ACOEM evaluators.

“With passage of health reform legislation, it is more important than ever for employers to help their employees stay healthy and productive. ACOEM is redoubling its efforts at making sure the employer community is aware of innovations that can help in this effort,” said Dr. Hudson. “The CHAA program is a great way to share the best ideas about improving employee health in the nation.”

Applicants in the competition receive detailed feedback from ACOEM on their programs regardless of whether they receive an award or not, which helps raise awareness of best practices and, in the long run, improves standards for employee health and safety. “Safer, healthier workplaces mean increased productivity, more job satisfaction, less harmful environmental impact and enhanced community relationships,” said Dr. Hudson.

To learn more about the Smithsonian, visit www.si.edu. To learn more about the CHAA, visit www.chaa.org.

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About ACOEM

The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) represents nearly 5,000 physicians specializing in occupational and environmental medicine. Founded in 1916, ACOEM is the nation’s largest medical society dedicated to promoting the health of workers through preventive medicine, clinical care, disability management, research, and education. For more information, visit www.acoem.org.