Cliffs wins gold for workplace wellness

TRAVELERS REST — Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA) has awarded The Cliffs Communities a national Well Workplace Award for its employee wellness program.

Scoring 177 out of a possible 180 points, The Cliffs captured a gold-level Well Workplace designation and was one of only 19 companies across America, and only one of three in South Carolina, to be honored with a 2009 designation.

Judging criteria for WELCOA Well Workplace Awards are rigorous and include measuring seven different benchmarks: capturing CEO support; creative cohesive wellness teams; collecting data to drive health efforts; crafting an operating plan; choosing appropriate interventions; creating a supportive environment; and consistently evaluating outcomes.

The Cliffs achieved a perfect score for its operating plan and nearly perfect scores for the remaining six benchmarks.

Each participating employee realized an average annual savings of $421 in medical claims; 50 percent of employees considered at-risk for high cholesterol reduced their cholesterol levels and 30 percent considered at-risk for high blood pressure saw reductions in those levels. Twenty-five percent of overweight employees lost weight, and 30 percent of employees who smoked successfully reduced their tobacco use.

"We are humbled to be recognized by such an esteemed leader in workplace wellness," said Tim Wiles, director of associate wellness for Sustainable Wellness Solutions, which manages The Cliffs Communities employee wellness program. "The WELCOA Award is among the top honors in this field, and we feel that it reflects what we have been working diligently to grow and accomplish over the past several years — that of building an incredible network of support for our associates and their families."

The Cliffs Associate Wellness Program offers a spectrum of programs and support services to all part- and full-time employees of The Cliffs, as well as their families. More than 80 percent of The Cliffs employees opt to participate in a voluntary, incentivized, yearlong program called The Cliffs Challenge that reinforces the importance of exercise, nutrition and total wellness.

The Cliffs employees receive free health screenings throughout the year and access to healthcare services.