



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS HEALTHCARE

Press release

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Southern Illinois Healthcare earns “Employer of Choice[®]” designation from national workforce evaluation group

Representatives of Southern Illinois Healthcare announced today that the regional healthcare leader has earned the designation of “Employer of Choice” from a nationally recognized workforce consulting group, Employer of Choice Inc.

Joyce Gioia, president, Employer of Choice Inc., said companies such as SIH are able to attract, optimize and retain top talent because they recognize employees as their greatest resource. “They are the companies with the knowledge, experience and resiliency to maintain high levels of customer service and loyalty,” she said. Gioia will be on hand at SIH on January 26, 2006, to present the Employer of Choice award and join in daylong celebrations at all SIH hospitals.

Southern Illinois Healthcare is the first Illinois company, health care related or otherwise, and one of only 19 companies nationwide to earn this distinction. It requires meeting rigorous standards for employee satisfaction, retention and performance.

To be an Employer of Choice SIH had to demonstrate dedication to a higher level of employee relationships, a level far beyond the normal practices of human resources. Southern Illinois Healthcare had to meet the high standards established by Employer of Choice, Inc. This fall, it successfully completed a rigorous evaluation process that included on-site inspections and is now officially an Employer of Choice.

“We thank our employees for making this possible,” said Tom Firestone, MD, president of Southern Illinois Healthcare. “It was their belief in this effort and their hard work that made the difference.”

Firestone said SIH embarked on a program, Building a Better Workplace, two years ago. That program involved employees and management working together at all levels to improve the workplace and increase the quality of patient care at Memorial Hospital of Carbondale,

Herrin Hospital, St. Joseph Memorial Hospital, Miners Memorial Health Center and various health and therapy centers scattered throughout southern Illinois.

“The positive participation of the employees was overwhelming. In the last two years I have seen SIH employees become an energized, involved, powerhouse that has improved the workplace in every facility and department,” Firestone said.

Scott Seaborn, vice president, human resources, said earning the designation of Employer of Choice[®] will benefit the region. “When you demonstrate that you are committed to your most important resource, your employees, you can attract and keep quality health care professionals. That means better employment and higher quality health care for the people of southern Illinois.”

The effort to officially become an Employer of Choice[®] grew out of the Building a Better Workplace program. Seaborn said he heard about the Employer of Choice[®] designation from consultants from Tomorrow’s Workforce, a program of Volunteer Hospitals of America (VHA). “We knew that our employees had worked hard these past couple of years to become an employer of choice and we decided that we wanted to verify their work by applying for this recognition.”

To be an Employer of Choice[®], Southern Illinois Healthcare had to prove itself in three areas. First, its annual employee satisfaction survey. Second, it had to complete an application detailing all the actions administration, management and employees would take to resolve any problems identified in the employee satisfaction survey. Finally, representatives from Employer of Choice Inc., made on-site visits to interview employees to determine if the efforts to make improvements were successful.

“And we scored high marks,” Seaborn said.

Though employees at SIH facilities will be celebrating their achievement, Seaborn emphasized that the journey to becoming the best possible workplace is not over. “This is a great milestone, but we will continue to make every effort and to work with our employees to become even better,” he said. “We want people to know that SIH intends to truly be the Employer of Choice[®] for southern Illinoisans.”

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