

VLCT PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Wellness Pays! Municipal Health Insurance Program Returns Money to Members for Fourth Year in a Row and to Individuals for the First Time for Participating in the Healthy Lifestyle Rewards Program.

Montpelier, Vermont. December 22, 2009. In recognition of their participation in a wellness initiative, 84 Vermont municipalities will soon receive checks from the association that insures them.

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) Health Trust will deliver just over \$288,000 in health insurance credits to the municipalities that successfully completed the fourth year of its Leader Program. Health Trust members will be credited for their wellness efforts in amounts up to \$22,000.

In addition to the Leader awards for municipalities, the VLCT Health Trust initiated a new program in 2009 called Healthy Lifestyle Rewards to reward individuals. Subscribers could earn \$50 to \$100 by getting a health screening, taking a health assessment, not using tobacco, exercising, eating well, getting a flu shot, and participating in other wellness activities. In addition to the financial reward, participants were entered in a grand prize drawing for a trip for two, sponsored by CIGNA. Six hundred forty-two individuals participated and received checks totaling \$62,020. The grand prize drawing took place on December 14, and the lucky winner was Nathan "Putt" Cowens from the City of Montpelier Public Works Department. Congratulations go out to Putt!

"We are very pleased to be able to financially reward our members and individuals for being proactive about their health," said Heidi Joyce, Senior Health Promotion Consultant with VLCT. "We know that our Leader Program asks a lot of our members, and we are very excited that they rose to the occasion and made wellness a priority."

Sponsor of:

VLCT Health Trust, Inc.

**VLCT Municipal Assistance
Center**

**VLCT Property and Casualty
Intermunicipal Fund, Inc.**

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Municipalities that participated in the Leader Program, including 15 new members this year, tracked their performance in a number of wellness programs and initiatives during 2009. Each one filled out a survey early in the year and again in October to measure their progress and earn a final score. Actions by towns, such as setting up a health and safety committee or hosting a flu shot clinic, were rewarded as were actions by individual employees, such as quitting smoking, completing a health risk assessment, or exercising more frequently. Municipalities also submitted underlying documentation so the VLCT Health Trust could verify their efforts.

The VLCT Health Trust Board of Directors supports the Leader Program as a way to encourage and reward municipalities for their wellness activities.

“This financial investment in a healthier population is one that we feel is very important to make,” Health Trust President and Waterbury Municipal Manager William Shepeluk said. “We need a variety of approaches to solve the problems of rising health insurance rates and increased utilization of medical services. Our Leader Program is just one approach, but a very necessary one.”

The VLCT Health Trust has 251 member municipalities and local government organizations and insures 5,500 municipal employees and their dependents. Members that participated in the Leader Program are: Addison County Solid Waste Management District, Barre City, Barre Housing Authority, Berkshire, Berlin, Bethel, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Burke, Castleton, Charleston, Charlotte, Chittenden County Superior Court, Chittenden Solid Waste District, Colchester, Cornwall, Danville, Derby, Derby Center Village, Derby Line Village, Dorset, Elmore, Essex Town, Essex Junction Village, Fairlee, Georgia, Grafton, Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District, Greensboro, Hardwick, Hartford, Hartland, Hinesburg, Johnson, Killington, Ludlow, Lyndon, Marshfield, Mendon, Middlebury, Milton, Montpelier, Northeast Vermont Development Association, Newport City, Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District, Northwest Regional Planning Commission, Norwich, Orleans Village, Pittsford, Plainfield, Proctor, Putney, Reading, Richford, Rockingham, Roxbury, Rutland Housing Authority, Shelburne, South Burlington, St. Albans City, Swanton Village, Thetford, Underhill, Vergennes, VLCT, Vernon, Waitsfield, Warren, Washington County Superior Court, Waterbury, Waterford, Weathersfield, Westminster, West Rutland, Westford, Wilmington, Windham Regional Commission, Windham Solid Waste District, Windsor, Winhall, Wolcott, Woodbury and Woodstock.

VLCT recently gave awards to six members for participating in its 2009 Leader Program. Governor Jim Douglas presented awards to the following municipalities at the VLCT Health Trust Annual Meeting on Friday, November 13, 2009:

Most Improved from 2008

Town of Hinesburg, 30% improvement

Highest Score

Town of Rockingham/Village of Bellows Falls, large-sized municipality, 63%

Chittenden Solid Waste District, medium-sized municipality, 67%

Town of Mendon, small-sized municipality, 70%

Town of Danville, Leader Light, 86.6%

Most Creative

Town of Ludlow, Big Buck Pedometer Program (during hunting season)

About VLCT: The Vermont League of Cities and Towns is a voluntary association of Vermont municipalities which offers training, technical assistance, information, legislative advocacy, and risk prevention services to Vermont’s local government officials. League members include all of Vermont’s 246 cities and towns as well as approximately 150 other municipal entities. The VLCT Health Trust is a non-profit health insurance pool open to all VLCT members.



Representatives from five of the six organizations that won 2009 Leader Awards accepted their awards at the VLCT Health Trust Annual Meeting in November 2009. These awards are in addition to health insurance rate credits earned by 86 member organizations for running successful wellness initiatives. Standing (L to R): Governor Jim Douglas; Jeannie Kundell-Wilson, Town of Hinesburg; Jennifer Getty, Chittenden Solid Waste District; Sara Tully and Nancy Gondella, Town of Mendon; Wendy Somers, Town of Danville; Frank Heald, Town of Ludlow. Front (L to R): Joe Damiata and Heidi Joyce, VLCT.



Nathan “Putt” Cowens (center), of the Montpelier Department of Public Works, was awarded the 2009 Grand Prize Trip by Heidi Joyce (left) and Joe Damiata (right) of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT). The prize is part of VLCT’s Healthy Lifestyle Rewards program, which supports municipal employees in developing and maintaining healthy habits at work and home.

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[For electronic copies of these photographs, please contact Ione Minot, Marketing Specialist, Risk Management Services, VLCT: iminot@vlct.org or 802-229-9111, ext. 113. Please specify desired resolution and format.]