



SENTARA®

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT

Pamela Walters
757.687.6308

www.sentara.com/newsroom

SENTARA HEALTHCARE AWARDED BY AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY FOR EMPLOYEE TOBACCO PROGRAM**OVERVIEW**

- 4th largest VA employer, Sentara Healthcare, receives American Cancer Society award for workplace tobacco cessation efforts.
- Sentara recognized for 100% tobacco free campus model, and cash incentives for employees trying to quit.
- Other Sentara tobacco cessation resources also available to anyone in the community, free of charge.

NORFOLK, VA – The fourth largest employer in Virginia, Sentara Healthcare, has been awarded the American Cancer Society’s (ACS) highest level of recognition for its Excellence in Workplace Tobacco Control Award, for the fourth time. With nearly 28,000 employees in Virginia, North Carolina and beyond, Sentara is fulfilling its mission to improve health every day, in part, through an advanced tobacco cessation program for employees and the community at large. Achievement of the ACS Excellence in Workplace Tobacco Control Award highlights the company’s commitment to helping eliminate tobacco use, the leading cause of preventable illness and death in the United States.

Dr. Thomas Lundquist, Chief Medical Officer for Optima Health, a division of Sentara, said, “Supporting the health and well-being of our valued employees is of the utmost importance at Sentara.” In his role of overseeing all Sentara employee wellness programs, Lundquist said, “We are extremely proud to receive this award from the American Cancer Society, for a fourth time, which recognizes our efforts to help lessen the effects of cancer on our workforce, improve workplace productivity and fight cancer.”

Sentara offers smoking cessation services for employees through its *Mission: Health* employee wellness program. As part of the program, employees and their spouses who wish to stop using tobacco products are eligible for an annual cash incentive of \$75 if they participate in a qualifying counseling plan. Through health coaching, group classes or phone counseling, and nicotine replacement therapy, all offered free of charge, many Sentara employees have reaped the benefits of working to cut out tobacco use in their lives, both for their health and their wallet.

Beginning in January, 2008, Sentara also shifted to a 100% tobacco-free campus model. Over the next year, all Sentara facilities became tobacco-free campuses, creating an environment that encourages staff, patients and visitors to improve their health by quitting tobacco use in all its forms.

“What really encouraged me to take action were all of the messages about the negative health effects caused by smoking that we receive at work” said a Sentara employee who wishes to remain anonymous. “I eventually gave in and decided to look into the program they offer, as I know this is a pretty nice employee benefit offered by Sentara. That and the hospital where I work is actually a completely tobacco-free campus, meaning that we can’t smoke outside of the building, in the parking lot or even in our car, which makes it pretty difficult to keep up the habit.”

Many other resources available to employees through Sentara’s award-winning tobacco cessation program are also available to anyone in the community, free of charge. Links to a toolkit, and the *Get Off Your Butt: Stay Smokeless For Life* self-paced audio program and workbook can be found on [Sentara’s website](#), along with information on group classes. Employer groups insured by Optima Health also have access to on-site tobacco cessation presentations, as well as one-on-one coaching and individual programs.

About Sentara Healthcare

[Sentara Healthcare](#), based in Norfolk, VA, celebrates 128 years in pursuit of its mission to improve health every day. Sentara is an integrated not-for-profit system of 12 hospitals in Virginia and North Carolina, including a Level I trauma center with [Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance](#). The Sentara family also includes four medical groups, ambulatory campuses, post-acute care services, the physician-led [Sentara Quality Care Network](#), the Sentara [College of Health Sciences](#), [Optima Health Plan](#) members in Virginia, Alabama and Ohio, and a team of professionals nearly 30,000 strong. Sentara is strategically focused on continuous improvement in quality, safety and the patient experience.

About Optima Health

Optima Health, based in Virginia, provides health insurance coverage to approximately 450,000 members. With 30 years of experience in the health insurance arena, Optima Health offers a suite of commercial products including consumer-directed, employee-owned and employer-sponsored plans, individual health plans, employee assistance programs and plans serving Medicare and Medicaid enrollees. Our provider network features more than 26,000 providers including specialists, primary care physicians and hospitals across Virginia. Optima Health offers programs to support members with chronic illnesses, customized wellness programs and integrated clinical and behavioral health services, as well as pharmacy management – all to help our members improve their health. Our goal is to provide better health, to be easy to use and offer services that are a great value. To learn more about Optima Health, visit www.optimahealth.com.