

From Policy to Purpose

Building Leadership, Culture, and Stability in Public Health



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Public Information Officer





Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- **Describe** HR and planning practices that build leadership, resilience, and sustainability
- **Identify** strategies to create and sustain intentional workplace culture
- **Explain** how clear, staff-informed HR policies improve stability, trust, and retention
- **Discuss** engagement programs that boost morale and community trust
- **Reflect** on ways to adapt leadership, policy, and culture practices in their own organizations

**“Leadership is not about being in charge. It is about taking care of those in your charge.”
– Simon Sinek**



Public Health Challenges

Addressing workforce stability is critical to improving public health outcomes.



Key Realities Affecting the Workforce

Workforce **turnover** and **burnout** significantly impact public health effectiveness.

Post-pandemic, there is increased demand for **flexibility, recognition** and **purpose**.

Public health often struggles with **limited funding + high responsibility**.

In 2018, retention at PCHD was only **30%**, highlighting workforce issues.

Generations in the Workplace

Understanding workforce expectations across generations is essential for public health.



Generation	Workplace Wants	Sources
Traditionalists (1928–1945)	Stability & Security; Respect for Authority; Clear Rules & Policies; Loyalty	SHRM Generational Differences Chart; Lancaster & Stillman (2002)
Baby Boomers (1946–1964)	Recognition for Hard Work; Professional Development; Job Security	SHRM; Pew Research Center (2010); Harvard Business Review
Gen X (1965–1980)	Independence; Efficiency; Career Growth	SHRM; Pew Research Center (2014)
Millennials (1981–1996)	Purpose & Meaning; Flexibility; Continuous Feedback; Development Opportunities; Technology Integration	Deloitte Millennial Survey (2019); Gallup (2016)
Gen Z (1997–2012)	Inclusivity & Diversity; Career Development Early; Digital Communication; Flexibility & Autonomy; Social Impact	Pew Research Center (2018); Deloitte Gen Z & Millennial Survey (2021)
Generation Alpha (2013–2025)	Seamless Technology; Extreme Personalization; Flexibility; Values-Driven Employers; Continuous Micro-Learning; Wellbeing & Balance	McCrindle Research (Gen Alpha Report 2020); Forbes (Future of Work & Gen Alpha, 2023)

The Real Cost of Turnover



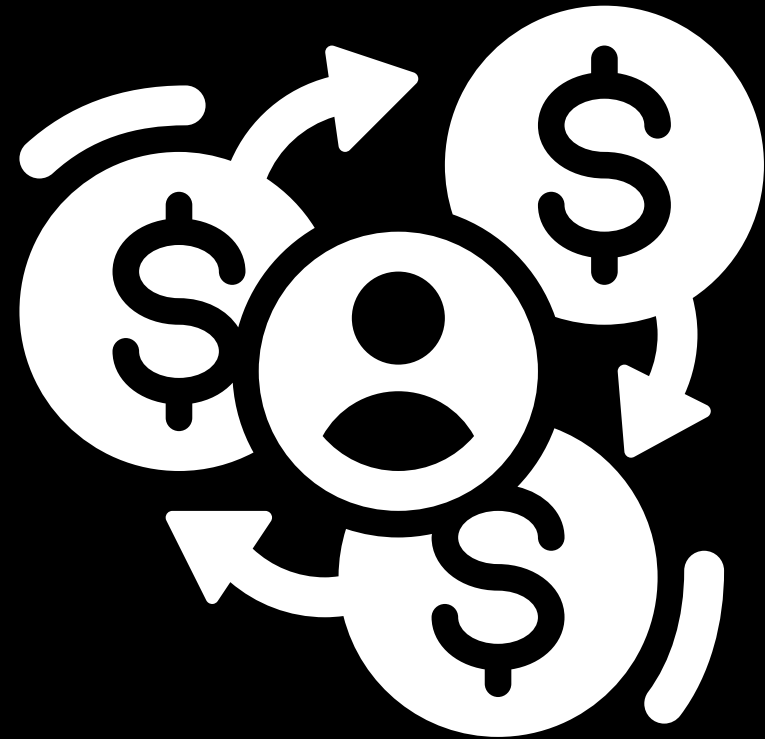
*Employee turnover affects not just finances but also **productivity and staff morale**, leading to burnout and disengagement among remaining team members.*

*SHRM estimates the total cost of turnover at **50%–200% of an employee's annual salary**.*



Direct Costs

These are the measurable, out-of-pocket expenses tied to losing and replacing an employee.



Recruitment Expenses, Advertising job postings, job board fees

Time spent by HR and hiring managers on screening, interviews, and selection

Onboarding & Training, Orientation costs (materials, trainer time, HR time)

Training sessions, certifications, and shadowing

Accrued PTO/vacation payouts

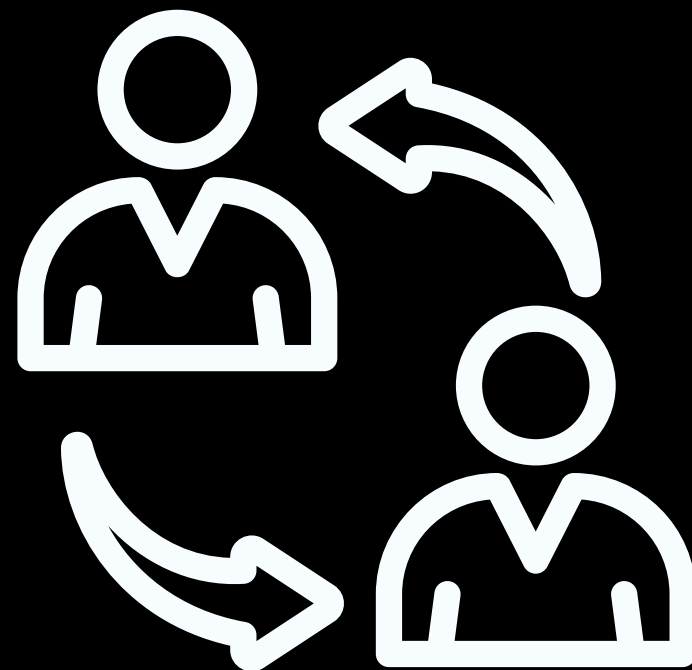
Separation Costs, Exit interviews and administrative processing

Overtime paid or comp time to existing staff

Unemployment insurance claims

Indirect Costs

These are less visible but often more significant, tied to the ripple effect of losing a team member.



Lost Productivity, Vacancy period where work isn't completed or is delayed

New hire operating below full capacity until fully trained

Impact on Team Performance

Increased workload and stress for remaining employees

Decline in morale or engagement if turnover is frequent

Customer/Community Impact, Disruption of relationships with clients, patients, or community partners

Reduced service quality and consistency, Institutional Knowledge Loss – Expertise, skills, and organizational memory walking out the door

Reputation & Retention Risks, Negative perception of the organization as unstable or high turnover

Greater difficulty attracting quality candidates in the future

Portage County Health District Workforce History



History of PCHD (2018–Present)

- 2018 retention rate: **31%**
- Over the past 5 years, PCHD experienced the **loss of key leadership** roles:
 - Health Commissioner
 - Director of Finance
 - Director of Nursing
 - Director of Environmental Health
- Departure of long-tenured staff with 10+ years of service



Portage County Health District Current Snapshot of Workforce



47

Employees (43 FT & 3 PT)

90%

Current Retention Rate



4

Divisions (Administration,
Finance, Environmental
Health and Community
Health)

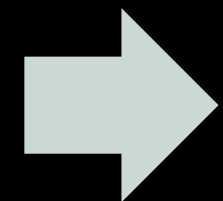
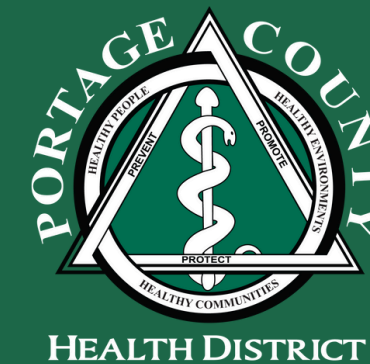
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Locations (Portage and
Columbiana County WIC)

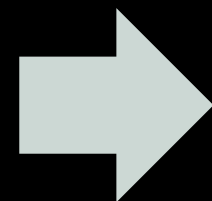


Pulse Surveys: Listening to Our Team

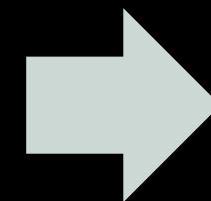
A Commitment to Employee
Engagement and Sustainable Practices



Launched in 2023, our **Pulse Surveys** shifted from informal feedback to structured insights, focusing on employee support and retention post-COVID.



Three formal surveys conducted annually have resulted in **transparency** in sharing outcomes, leading to actionable changes in policies and internal practices.



The engagement from staff, enabling honest conversations, has driven our commitment to professional growth, enhancing career goals and overall workplace satisfaction.



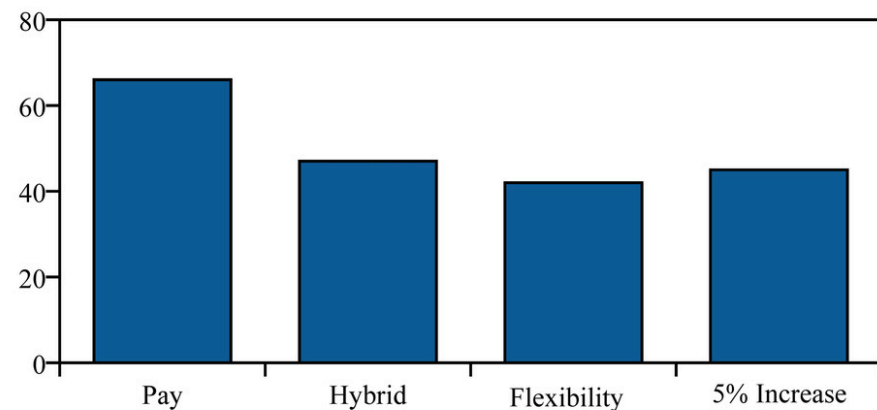
PCHD Pulse Survey Results – 2023



Overall Sentiment

- Commitment to Mission: Staff feel their work is meaningful and aligned with personal values.
- Positive Culture Drivers: Flexible scheduling, supportive coworkers, and approachable leadership.
- Professional Pride: 95% feel challenged in their role, showing strong engagement.

Turnover Risk Drivers (%)



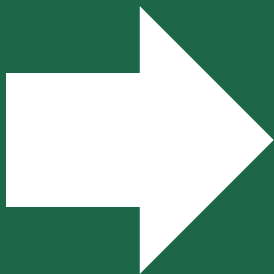
Key Findings

- Professional Growth: 76% access training, 24% report barriers.
- Retention Motivators: Benefits, flexibility, and meaningful work.
- Culture Feedback: Desire for fairness, collaboration, and recognition.
- Non-Monetary Incentives: More time off, hybrid schedules, casual dress, recognition events.

Opportunities for Growth

Area	Opportunities
Career Development	Training pathways, mentorship, leadership development.
Recognition & Culture	Consistent recognition and milestone celebrations.
Flexibility & Retention	Explore retention opportunities, flexible scheduling and special projects.
Leadership & Accountability	Supervisor refreshers in communication and accountability..
Work Environment and Policy	Security enhancements, policy improvements.

Staff are proud of their work and are committed to PCHD’s mission, but pay, flexibility, and culture remain key retention risks.



PORTAGE COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT 2025 EMPLOYEE PULSE SURVEY RESULTS

What Our Employees Are Saying



Results are based on a 5-star rating scale.

Employee Ratings on a 5-Point Scale

- 4.6** would recommend PCHD as a great place to work.
- 4.5** feel satisfied with their job at PCHD.
- 91%** feel they receive meaningful feedback for contributions.

97%

of employees
plan to continue
working at PCHD
2 years from now.



80%
of respondents rated the overall
work environment
8 or above on a scale of 1-10

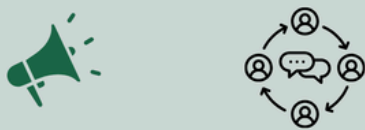
Employee Perceptions of Value and Respect in the Workplace

91%
Feel Valued and
Respected by
leadership and
colleagues



Employees feel they have
the resources they need
to do their job well.

91%



83%

of respondents rated
communication as
Good or above.

91%

Employees feel they have
opportunities for professional
growth and development.

80%

of employees feel informed
about important updates and
decisions.

72%

of respondents rated their
work-life balance as
Good or Excellent.

Building Retention Through Listening & Action



Retention didn't climb from 30% to 90% by accident — it was the result of listening to staff and closing the feedback loop.

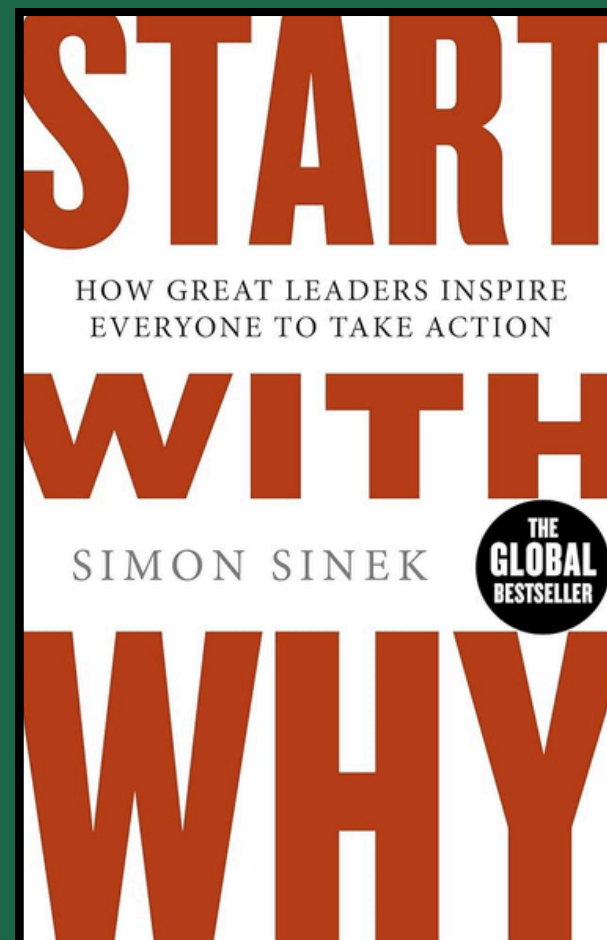


Our Approach:

- **Commitment to Growth:** Supporting staff professionally and personally
- **Two-Way Dialogue:** Asking questions and truly listening
- **Transparency:** Honest conversations on what we can and cannot do
- **Career Development:** Aligning career goals and succession planning with individual “dreams”
- **Empowering our Team:** Encouraging new skills and passion projects
- **Shared Decision-Making:** Involving staff in organizational decisions
- **Inclusive Committees:** Representation from every division on all committees



**“People don’t buy what you do;
they buy why you do it.”
– Simon Sinek, Start With Why**





From Data to Action

HR Policies and Collective Leadership Driving Stability

Vision Development

Establishing a clear **and inspiring vision** for our team.

Strategy Implementation

Division level involvement in strategies, policy changes and feedback.

Team Engagement

Actively involving employees to foster support and **collaboration** in making changes.

Outcomes Measurement

Assessing progress and impact to ensure **sustainable improvements.**

Policy and Benefit Improvements

- A complete overhaul of the **Personnel Manual** enhances clarity and fairness, ensuring all employees understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Expanded **flexibility and new benefits**, including trading sick leave for personal days, aim to improve work-life balance and retention.



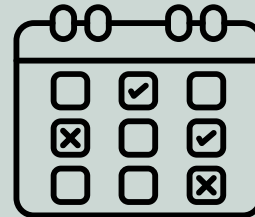
Enhancements to Employee Benefits



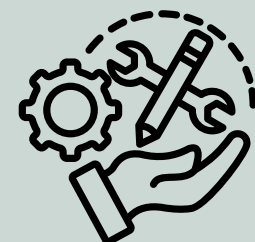
- Longevity Pay Structure: Rewards loyalty, strengthens retention
- Holiday Pay for part-time employees
- Additional Holidays (15)



- New Clothing Allowance
Reimbursement supports employees in maintaining a branded and professional appearance.



- Flexible schedules
- PTO is restored if an emergency closure occurs after time was requested.
- Sick leave conversion to personal time

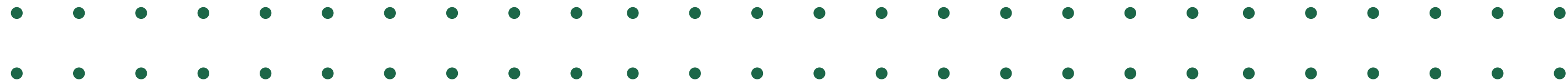


- Additional continuing education and certifications approved for reimbursement
- Support for continued professional development



What Fills Your Cup?

Community-driven initiatives that foster engagement and purpose, highlighting impactful programs and their contributions to our mission.



Pop-Up Pantry

The **Pop-Up Pantry** serves as a vital resource, engaging the community by providing food and support while facilitating partnerships and volunteer involvement.



Community Impact

Serves 250–300 families each month

Largest program in 8 counties served

Connects to emergency preparedness training and community partners

Community Engagement

15–18 volunteers actively participate monthly through MRC and university volunteers

Builds relationships with community partners

Inspired other health departments to replicate





POP-UP FOOD PANTRY

Drive Thru
The First Thursday of Every Month
1:00pm - 3:00pm



NEW DRIVE-THRU SERVICE!

Easy access from the comfort of your car from East Main Street.

COME TO

Location:
999 East Main Street
Ravenna, Ohio 44266
Visit Our Website
www.portagehealth.net

Thrive Together Farmers Market and Tasty Tuesdays



The Farmers Market, led by our finance team, features local vendors, produce, and free yoga, which promotes community wellness. Our market accepts SNAP, WIC, and Senior benefits.



Local Vendors

Fresh produce from nearby farms

Support for small local farmers and businesses

Variety of produce and goods available

Community Wellness

Access to healthy foods
Free yoga

Health education and blood pressure screenings

SNAP, WIC and Senior benefits accepted



Breastfeeding Support and Milk Bank Partnership

Supporting maternal health, infant nutrition, and community wellness



The **Breastfeeding Room**

A Gold Standard Space

- Provides a safe, private place for staff and community members to nurse, pump, and store breastmilk
- Serves as a **model space** for businesses and organizations to support employees
- Promotes healthy infant nutrition practices
- Reinforces our commitment to maternal health and workplace wellness



Partnership with Ohio Mothers' Milk Bank



Collecting and Sharing Nourishment

- Donated breastmilk is collected locally and shipped to the Milk Bank
- Milk Bank distributes throughout Ohio, primarily to NICUs caring for premature and medically fragile infants
- Together, we're strengthening maternal and infant health across the state

7,549

Ounces collected in the last 12 months



Become a Milk Donor

The OhioHealth Mothers' Milk Bank relies on donations from healthy, lactating women who generously provide milk to help other babies. The donated milk is pasteurized, frozen and distributed by physician prescription.

The following screening process is necessary to become a donor:

- + Phone interview
- + Written medical and lifestyle history
- + Medical release form signed by the donor and healthcare providers for both the donor and her baby
- + Blood test to screen for HIV, HTLV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Syphilis (cost covered by the Milk Bank)

Approved Donors can drop off milk at 999 East Main Street, Ravenna, OH, 44266 Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM.

Questions?

If you have any questions or would like to donate, call (614) 566-0630 or email MilkBank@OhioHealth.com



For more info, scan the QR code to visit our website: OhioHealth.com/Locations/Womens-Health/Mothers-Milk-Bank



GIS Coordinator Role

Driving innovation in data, partnerships, and community impact

Key Contributions:

- Modernized Data Systems
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Accessible Dashboards
- Public Health Outreach
- Showcasing Innovation
- Employee Engagement



Find Food Resources Easily with Our New Dashboard!

Helping Portage County residents access nutritious food options.

Scan to Find Food Near You



Introducing the Food Resource Dashboard

- 🍏 **Find Food Help Near You!**
- ✓ Search **food pantries**, farmers markets, WIC & SNAP.
- ✓ View locations on an interactive map with contact info.
- ✓ **Filter by day** to see what's open today!



1 in 7

U.S. residents are at risk of hunger



Portage County Health District

999 E Main St, Ravenna, OH 44266

330-296-9919 | www.portagehealth.net

Plastic Bag Recycling Program



Staff led passion project:

- **Purpose:** reduce plastic waste and model simple sustainability
- **Partnership:** PCHD and Portage County Recycling
- **Engagement:** staff champions and community participation
with regular progress updates
- **Impact:** 1,002 pounds collected and converted into a
community bench
- **Culture win:** quick, low cost project that built pride and
teamwork, policy to purpose in action

The poster for the Plastic Bag Recycling Program features the Portage County Health District logo in the top left corner. A large red stamp with the word "ACCOMPLISHED" is prominently displayed. Below it, the text "Reduce Plastic Waste" is written in bold. A green progress bar shows "1002lbs collected of 1000lbs goal". A green recycling symbol is on the right. The title "Plastic Bag Recycling Program" is in large bold letters, followed by the instruction "Drop off your plastic bags in our lobby and help us recycle them into usable benches!". The location "999 E. Main Street, Ravenna, OH" is listed. A list of acceptable items includes grocery bags, bubble wrap, cereal bags, dry cleaning bags, and Ziploc bags. A photo of a green park bench is shown on the right.

ACCOMPLISHED

Reduce Plastic Waste

1002lbs collected of 1000lbs goal

Plastic Bag Recycling Program

Drop off your plastic bags in our lobby and help us recycle them into usable benches!

999 E. Main Street, Ravenna, OH

Acceptable Items:

- ☐ Grocery bags / ice bags / bread bags
- ☐ Bubble wrap / plastic shipping envelopes
- ☐ Cereal bags / snack bags
- ☐ Dry cleaning bags
- ☐ Ziploc bags and similar plastic bags

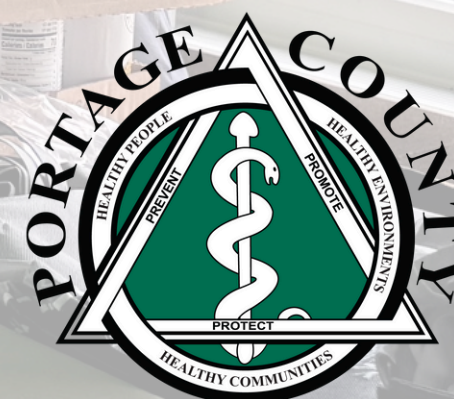
A photograph of a green park bench with a slatted back and seat, set on a gravel surface in front of a brick building.



**What programs in your agency connect
staff to purpose beyond their day-to-day?
What keeps your team tied to your mission?**

AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL
**FOOD
BANK**

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**



HEALTH DISTRICT

Leadership & Workforce Development: Building Stronger Teams Together



- **DiSC assessments** for all staff to enhance workplace communication by identifying different personality styles, fostering **collaboration, communication and improving team dynamics**. This leads to more effective leadership and a stronger workforce culture.
- **Cross Training** within and outside of divisions in areas of interest.
- **Continued leadership development** through ongoing all leadership training.
- Participation in **local leadership groups** (Leadership Portage County) and committees.



Fostering a Culture of Appreciation

Recognition & Communication

Enhancing Engagement through acknowledgement



I wanted to thank you all for helping put on the Overdose Awareness Day event we hosted at Streetsboro City Park on 8.29. All of you helped me put this event together whether you helped with the purchasing process, the advertisement, getting the raffle basket items purchased, helping find a food truck, working the event, or hauling all the tents and tables in your truck. Each and every one of you stepped up to help me when I needed it, I appreciate all of you sooo much! 😊

I want to say thank you for all the birthday wishes! 🎉 And a special shout out to Olivia Card for putting together an ice cream sundae bar. It was so good! Thank you again! 🍰

Rachel,
This is overdue! I just wanted to say that your dedication to your families is truly inspiring. Last Thursday during the torrential downpour that happened, you still made sure that a toddler that needed a car seat got one installed for a safe trip home. Although you were completely soaked, you treated the family with compassion and no short-cuts. Your kindness and dedication was a bright sunny spot in that gray and rainy afternoon. ☀️

Congratulations, Will!

Here's a picture of Will from the United Way Board induction meeting last Tuesday! We're proud to see him representing our team. Great job, Will!

AMAZING JOB with the planning of BAM25. Your hard work payed off. It was one of the BEST BAM events we have had. The Lisbon WIC team appreciates all of your creativity and great ideas.

I cannot thank Cindy enough for all her hard work in getting the employee lactation room together. Between the building of furniture and arranging things so beautifully, she really went above and beyond to help me. I truly appreciate her willingness to help me while I have been out of the office so much this month especially with how short-staffed WIC has been. I absolutely love how the room has come together. It's beautiful! Thank you!

Assembly Platform

Peer kudos, real-time recognition, workflows and announcements

A screenshot of the Assembly Platform web application. The interface is divided into three main sections: a left sidebar, a central feed, and a right sidebar.
Left Sidebar: Contains navigation links for Home, Notifications (5), Rewards, Recognition, Challenges, AI Reporting, and DoraAI Recognition (BETA). Below these are "MY FOLDERS" (PCHD Home Base, PCHD Announcements) and "MY FLOWS" (Anonymous Suggestion Box, Birthday Card, Book Club, General News Feed, Our Team's Pets).
Central Feed: At the top, it says "Good Afternoon, Sarah!". Below is a "Create a post..." input field with a user icon "SM". The feed is filtered by "Everyone" and "My activity". A post by "Melissa Colella" (M) is shown, dated "an hour ago", with a "RECOGNITION" tag. It features a video of two men in suits, one of whom is waving. The video has a "peacock" watermark. Below the video, the name "Danielle Steighner" is visible. A "DS" icon and "+ 50" points are also shown.
Right Sidebar: Titled "My Trophies", it shows a progress bar for "To give" (500) and "To redeem" (230). A "0/500 Given" status is at the bottom.

Gratitude and Recognition



Assembly Platform

Peer kudos, real-time recognition, enhancing team engagement and satisfaction



Gratitude Practices

Closing meetings with gratitude, quarterly prize drawings



Visual Celebrations

Pictures of staff with plaques, social media shoutouts and internal recognition



Importance of Recognition

Recognition boosts retention, engagement, and workplace satisfaction

Culture Additions: Enhancing Staff Engagement



PCHD PHun Committee

The PCHD PHun Committee hosts engaging activities to enhance staff morale and promote a positive workplace culture.

PCHD Clubs

Wellness, Walking/Running, Garden and Book

Coffee with the Commissioner

Fosters open dialogue and builds trust between staff and leadership through informal discussions over coffee.

Friendsgiving & Holiday Party

Enjoy festivities, awards, and a staff photo slideshow.

Public Health Spirit Week and Staff Appreciation Day

Engage in fun activities that boost team morale.

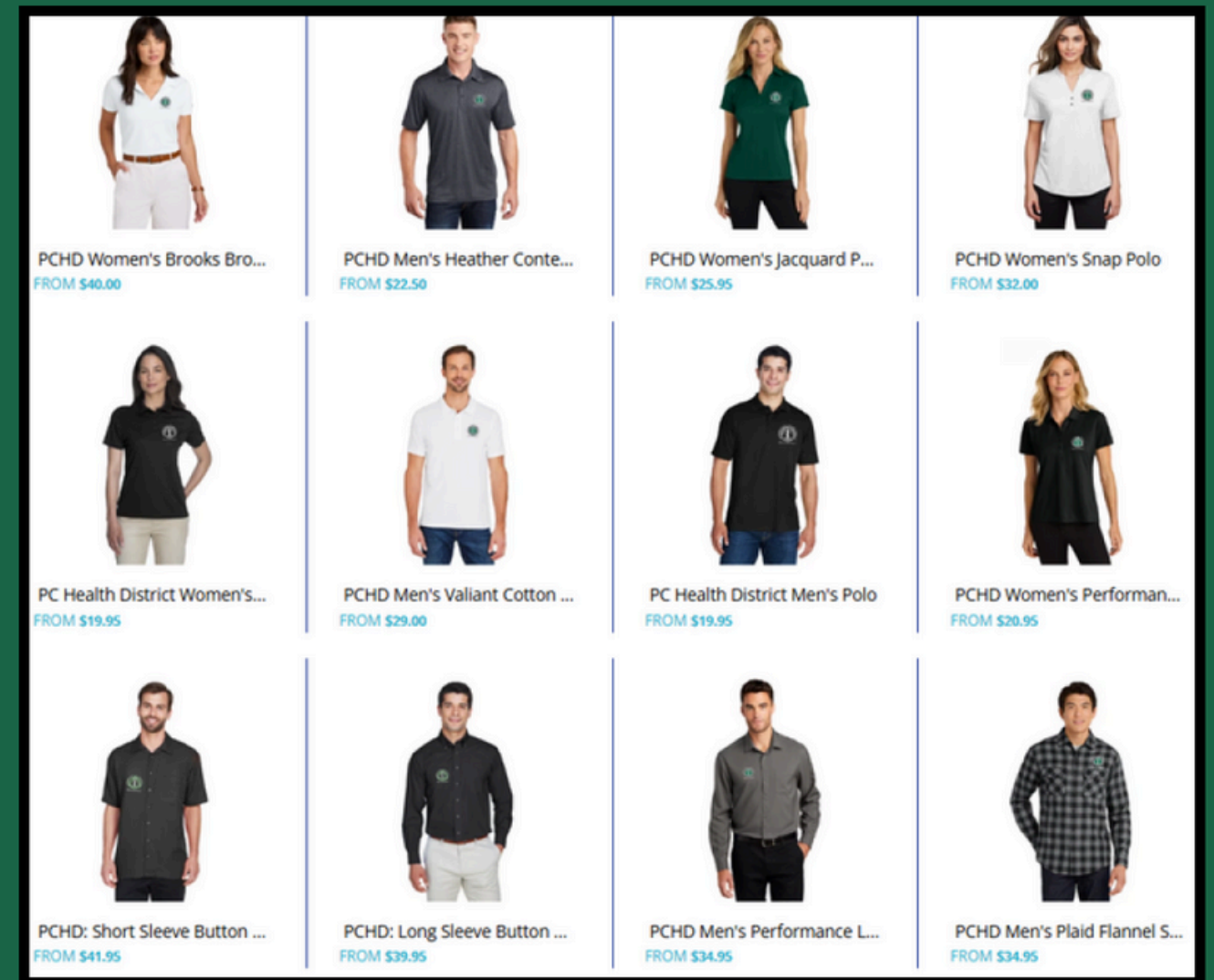


PCHD Clothing Reimbursement

Enhancing our professional identity through branded clothing



Check out examples of our PCHD collection



Explore the benefits of PCHD branded clothing options for our team

38+ branded clothing items to enhance team identity.

Reinforce our **professional identity** and visible branding within the community.

\$100 clothing reimbursement allowance to encourage professional attire and reducing financial burden on staff.

Branded clothing **fosters pride, unity, and a sense of being part of a team**, which can improve morale and engagement.



PCHD Wellness

Why Wellness Matters for Engagement



PCHD Wellness Reimbursement Program – Up to **\$100 annually** for various health-related expenses.

Beyond gym memberships: Access to **Calm, Headspace, nutrition** resources, fitness equipment, yoga, race registrations, and more.

Promotes **overall health**, focus, and productivity, creating a more effective and healthy workforce.

Builds collaboration and **team connection**, fostering a supportive and engaged workplace culture.

Reduces burnout and turnover, demonstrating that we **invest in our employees** as whole people.



FALL INTO FITNESS

Sept 16 – Nov 14

Climb Mount Everest - One step at a time!

Walking can lower heart disease risk by 35%

👉 Scan the QR code to register for your bobblehead to be placed on the mountain!

Once you reach 50,000 steps, move your bobblehead and send an email to Kim to enter for a chance to win!



👉 🍰 Sunrise Sip + Stroll — THURSDAY, 9/18 at 8:15 AM



Results We're Proud of

Retention has dramatically increased to **90%**, reflecting our team's commitment.

The Pulse survey indicates a **4.6/5 satisfaction rate**, highlighting employee contentment and engagement.

New programs like the **Farmers Market** and **Pop-Up Pantry** have been very successful resulting in new partnerships established.

Successfully increased social media engagement, resulting in **stronger community connections**, initiatives and engagement in our programs.

Our Pop-Up Food Pantry was nominated for **Health Initiative of the Year Award** and one of our employees as **Community Hero Award**.



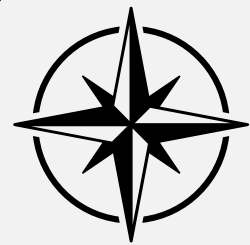
STAY ALIVE!
don't TXT & drive

LOOK OUT
FOR MOTORCYCLES



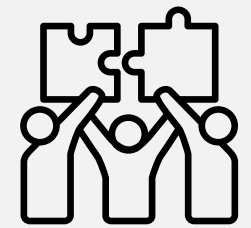
Key Takeaways

Strong leadership, intentional culture, fair policies, and purpose-driven programs drive engagement, trust, and retention.



Leadership

Built intentionally through development and cross-training.



Culture

Sustained by recognition, openness, and purpose-driven engagement.



Policies

Revised with staff input, ensuring fairness and trust.



Purpose

Engagement programs, “fill cups” and connect staff to the mission.

Contact Us



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