



PRESS RELEASE
(For immediate release)

HERO announces winners of 2023 Health & Well-Being Awards

The annual HERO awards honor dedication and commitment to the advancement of health and well-being.

Salt Lake City, UT (September 28, 2023) – The Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) recognized outstanding contributions by workplace professionals within the health and well-being industry during the HERO Forum23 annual conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Award recipients included: K. Andrew Crighton, MD (**Bill Whitmer Leadership Award**), Laurie Whitsel, PhD (**Mark Dundon Research Award**), Dane Friend, JD (**Jerry Noyce Executive Health Champion Award**), Megan Amaya, PhD (**Heart of HERO Award**), and Lauren Paige Zabelsky, (**Healthy HERO Award**).

“HERO is proud to recognize these individuals who are making meaningful impact on the science and practice of health and well-being,” said Karen Moseley, HERO President & CEO. *“Around the Forum23 theme of businesses ‘doing well by doing good’, it is an honor to gather together and celebrate these individuals for their role in elevating health and well-being as an individual and organizational imperative.”*

About the recipients:

- **Bill Whitmer Leadership Award** K. Andrew Crighton, MD, is the founder of Crighton Consulting and is known for remarkable contributions to the health and well-being space over a stellar career. Most significantly, as the chief medical officer and head of the global health organization at Prudential, he built a best-practice corporate culture of health and well-being, one that has been studied and featured in case studies and books on the subject. Crighton is nationally recognized for his work connecting health and performance, physical and mental health, and reducing disparities in the workplace. He serves on two national boards, including The Health Project as board chair and the Carolyn C. Mattingly Mental Health Award, and his service and leadership have also benefited the boards of the Arthritis Foundation, HERO, and the Greater Newark Healthcare Coalition.
- **Mark Dundon Research Award** Laurie Whitsel, PhD, is the national vice president of policy research for the American Heart Association (AHA) and senior advisor to the Physical Activity Alliance. She is a recognized leader in translating science and evidence

into impactful health policy. In her role with the Physical Activity Alliance, she is helping to lead national policy and systems change to integrate physical activity assessment, prescription and referral into health care delivery and improve population health. Whitsel is an influential researcher in public health, cardiovascular health, and health promotion and has published more than 50 peer-reviewed articles on these topics, with another 60 policy statements by the AHA policy team under her leadership. She is a regular guest lecturer at Columbia University and has served on expert advisory groups with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, RAND, the CDC, the Bipartisan Policy Center, HERO, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

- **Jerry Noyce Executive Health Champion Award** Dane Friend, JD, is the chief human resources and well-being officer at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM). For over 20 years, he has embraced the BCM mission to improve human health in all that he oversees. Friend has been an influential stakeholder of BCM's well-being program since its inception in 2014 and led its expansion as the centralized well-being function. Through his leadership, BCM has established a best-in-class well-being program, winning numerous awards including the C. Everett Koop National Health Award (2019) and in the nation's Healthiest 100 ranking since 2015. Friend models well-being at every level, including as a cyclist raising money for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.
- **Heart of HERO Award** Megan Amaya, PhD, currently serves in numerous leadership, administrative, teaching and service roles at The Ohio State University, including associate clinical professor, director of health promotion and wellness, and co-director of the Bachelor of Science in Health and Wellness undergraduate program. She leads a team that implements wellness strategy, programs and services for university students, faculty, staff and the State of Ohio community. Additionally, Amaya is shaping the next generation of health promotion professionals through her teaching. Her passionate 'heart' is evidenced by her commitment to health and well-being and her transformative ability to guide program operations impacting over 100,000 individuals annually. She is a national subject matter expert in employee health and wellness, evidenced by her leadership in the National Consortium for Building Healthy Academic Communities, HERO, the Ohio Society for Public Health Educators, the Healthy Business Council of Ohio, and the CDC's Work@Health initiative.
- **Healthy HERO Award**, sponsored by Workpartners, a health and productivity solutions company and affiliate of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and UPMC Health Plan, recognizes individuals who have improved their overall health and well-being by making a significant lifestyle change. The 2023 Healthy HERO Award recipient is Lauren Paige Zabelsky, the teen librarian in the Office of Programmatic Services for Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

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About HERO – HERO (Health Enhancement Research Organization) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation that was established in 1996. HERO is dedicated to identifying and sharing best practices that improve the health and well-being of employees, their families, and communities. To learn more, visit www.hero-health.org. Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/heroehm, and on [LinkedIn](#).