

# 2025 HERO Workplace Health & Well-Being Awards

September 16-17, 2025



# BILL WHITMER LEADERSHIP AWARD

Dexter Shurney, MD, MBA, MPH



Dr. Dexter Shurney, MD, MBA, MPH is a population health innovator, currently serving as the EVP and Chief Health Officer for Blue Zones, Chief Physician Executive for Blue Zones Health, and Senior Medical Advisor for Modify Health. Prior to Blue Zones, he was Chief Health Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Officer for Adventist Health. He has an extensive background in health care management and policy. He has served on numerous boards, including as former president of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine and is currently the chair of Health Enhancement Research Organization.

Former roles Dr. Shurney has held include Chief Medical Director / Executive Director for Global Health Benefits and Corporate Wellness for Cummins, Inc., and Chief Medical Director, Employee Health Plan for Vanderbilt University and Medical Center. During his tenure at Vanderbilt, he also held joint faculty appointments as Assistant Clinical Professor, Division of Internal Medicine and Public Health, and Adjunct Faculty, Owens Graduate School of Management. For a number of years, he served as the Chief Medical Officer for Healthways. It was at that time that he was appointed by Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen to Chair the Tennessee Diabetes Prevention and Health Improvement Board. He is also the former Chief Medical Officer and Vice President of medical affairs for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and served as chair of the Business Strategies Committee for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP).

Dr. Shurney is co-author of the book "Integrating Wellness into Your Disease Management Programs" which is a "how- to" strategic guide for employers that wish to innovate their approach to chronic condition management. He authored a chapter for the 2026 book, "Lifestyle Medicine and the Primary Care Provider: A Practical Guide to Enabling Whole Person Care." Dr. Shurney is also a former Editor of the Journal of Managed Care Physicians.

Dr. Shurney attended Loma Linda University for his undergraduate training, and later Howard University College of Medicine where he received his degree in medicine. He holds Masters' Degrees in Business and in Public Health from the University of Detroit/Mercy and the Medical College of Wisconsin, respectively. He is a fellow in the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, and is board certified in Preventive Medicine, Public Health, and Lifestyle Medicine.

Dr. Shurney's career demonstrates a depth and breadth of knowledge, experience and accomplishments that have created pathways between healthcare, workplaces, and the community. He is a champion for health equity and diversity as the solution to America's healthcare crisis. He can move seamlessly between the board room and the clinic, always connecting with humility, intelligence and kindness. Those who are fortunate enough to call him Dexter leave every encounter feeling seen and heard, and more empowered to take the next healthy step.

# MARK DUNDON RESEARCH AWARD

Bruce Sherman, MD



Bruce Sherman, MD, FCCP, FACP, is a workforce health and well-being consultant focused on optimizing investments in equitable workforce health and well-being. He is an adjunct professor in the Department of Public Health Education at UNC-Greensboro and is a member of the faculty at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Dr. Sherman also serves as a medical advisor for the North Carolina Business Coalition on Health. Previously, Bruce served as the consulting corporate medical director for Wal-Mart, Whirlpool, and Goodyear. Bruce received his MD from NYU, his MA from Harvard and his ScB from Brown.

Bruce's research interests include the effects of racial and socioeconomic disparities on healthcare services use, and he has been a champion for strategies that lead to more equitable employee health benefits. His studies have bolstered the business case for investments in workforce health including his seminal article in Health Affairs that highlighted the differences in healthcare utilization and health care costs according to employee wage categories. His interest in health inequities has produced influential and wide-ranging peer reviewed journal articles on workplace determinants of health; the unique health challenges of low-wage workers; the implication of employee non-participation in well-being programs; and the importance of health equity in diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Bruce has collaborated with researchers from our nation's most renowned institutions including the University of Michigan, University of Illinois Chicago, Harvard University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Dr. Sherman is known for his extraordinary blend of intellect and creativity and for his relentless pursuit of excellence, all delivered with remarkable humility. He exudes kindness in every encounter, whether providing feedback on a manuscript or mentoring colleagues. His dedication, innovation, and unwavering commitment to health equity have propelled the wellness field into new and important areas of scholarship. Bruce's personal and professional dedication to leadership in the field exemplifies what the Mark Dundon Research award seeks to honor.

---

## Mark Dundon Research Award

This award honors dedication and commitment to the field of health and well-being and acknowledges outstanding achievements in the area of research.

**Mark Dundon** contributed to the advancement of workplace health and well-being (HWB) for the decades he spent working in the healthcare industry. Best known within the ranks of the HERO membership as the co-founder and former Chairman of the Board of HERO, Mark's contributions to the field of HWB research and the healthcare field include running a three-state healthcare system in Kentucky and providing the seed money for ground-breaking research. Each year at the HERO Forum, the Mark Dundon Research Award is presented to the professional who most closely embodies his outstanding work in the area of workplace HWB research.

### PAST RECIPIENTS

2011 – Ron Goetzel, PhD, Truven Health Analytics / Johns Hopkins University

2012 – David Anderson, PhD, StayWell

2013 – Nicolaas Pronk, PhD, MA, FACS, HealthPartners

2014 – Dee W. Edington, PhD, Edington Associates, LLC

2015 – Wayne Burton MD, American Express

2016 – Laura A. Linnan, ScD, UNC-Chapel Hill

2017 – Glorian Sorensen, PhD, MPH, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

2018 – Kerry Evers, PhD, and Sara Johnson, PhD, Pro-Change Behavior Systems, Inc.

2019 – Debra Lerner, MSc, PhD, Tufts Medical Center Institute for Clinical Research and Health Policy Studies

2020 – Victor J. Strecher, PhD, MPH, University of Michigan's Schools of Public Health and Medicine

2021 – Rachel Henke, PhD, IBM Watson Health

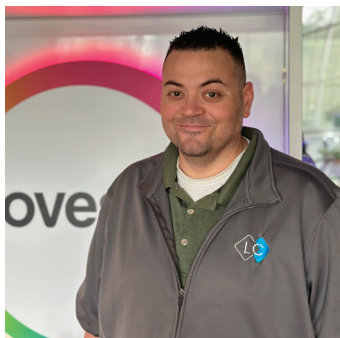
2022 – Jessica Grossmeier, PhD, MPH, Jessica Grossmeier Consulting

2023 – Laurie Whitsel, PhD, American Heart Association

2024 – Ronald J Ozminowski, PhD, Aon

# HEALTHY HERO AWARD

Adam Houdeshell, Covestro



Adam has always enjoyed playing sports, especially baseball and softball. He started playing as a young child and continued all the way through Legion baseball in high school. To this day, he plays softball with his church and coaches his kids in baseball. He is even the president of his local little league, where he helps many children learn the game he loves.

Adam took an approach to life that did not set him up for longevity in life. After high school, Adam made two decisions that caused this: he started tobacco use and stopped weighing himself. He decided that as long as he could do the things that he enjoyed and do the things needed, then it shouldn't matter. This meant that he continuously gained weight and would become

more easily winded as he got older and ended up in a spot that made him want to make a change. Eventually, Adam realized that he was letting tobacco control his life, and he was tired of it. He knew that quitting tobacco use was going to be difficult but necessary. He had tried on several occasions prior to this, but this time was different. This time, he decided to get help. This is where Workpartners came into play. Through his doctor, Adam started using the patch, and Workpartners provided them to him. Adam stuck with the program, took tobacco cessation classes offered through Workpartners and successfully quit tobacco without ever looking back.

Now, it was time to address the other elephant in the room. Not only had Adam gained over 100 pounds since high school, but quitting tobacco was accompanied by more weight gain. He also was experiencing joint pain in his knees and ankles, and he had sleep apnea as a result of the excess weight. It was time to do something and do it fast. The Weight Loss Challenge that Covestro sponsored in conjunction with Workpartners was Adam's chance to take a serious shot at changing the trajectory of his weight management journey. Providing a competitive element to weight loss would help Adam drive for success. During the challenge, Adam lost 61.9 pounds and didn't stop there. He used intermittent fasting and ensured a 10,000 step per day minimum to achieve this accomplishment. Fasting didn't just provide him with weight loss, but also a chance to tap into the spiritual side of fasting. Often, Adam had to lean on his faith in God as a support to get through fasting goals. Since the challenge, Adam has continued his weight loss journey and has lost in total over 85 pounds!

This health journey has been not only challenging but rewarding as well. Now, Adam's weight is managed and sustainable, his sleep apnea is no longer presenting itself, and the joint pain has decreased significantly. When playing softball, he is able to perform and not be in as much pain, and he even ran with the baseball team he coached after every win. Overall, his value of life has been improved, and it is due in large part to the programs that Workpartners makes available to its members. Wellness management takes work, no matter the circumstances. Having Workpartners helps make the work less of a burden and more of a challenge. Let this be your inspiration to take the challenge for your health!

Sponsored by  
**workpartners**

## Healthy HERO Award

The Healthy HERO Award program enables sponsoring organizations to highlight the successes of individuals who participate in their health and well-being program. This year's Healthy HERO Award sponsor is Workpartners, a health and productivity solutions company and affiliate of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and UPMC Health Plan. Workpartners' Role Model Program recognizes employees who improved their overall health and well being by making a significant lifestyle change, such as quitting smoking, losing weight, becoming more active, eating healthier, or managing stress.

### PAST RECIPIENTS

2017 – Brent Easton, Mercy Health. Sponsor, Alliant Employee Benefits.

2018 – Amanda Potter, Midco. Sponsor, Alliant Employee Benefits.

2019 – Keara Vance, Workpartners

2020 – Deborah Moon, UPMC

2021 – Rebecca Orenstein, University of Pittsburgh

2022 – Anneliese (Lisa) Murphree, UPMC and the University of Pittsburgh

2023 – Lauren Paige Zabelsky, MLS, Office of Programmatic Services, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

2024 – Carlo Anton Fontenot, Covestro LLC

Bill Whitmer Leadership Award

This award honors dedication and commitment to the field of health and well-being and acknowledges outstanding achievements in the area of leadership. As the co-founder and former CEO of HERO, Bill Whitmer (and HERO) issued a loud Wake UP Call for America that our nation was in the midst of a perfect storm of poor health, an aging population, and rising health care costs. Bill spent years bringing together leaders in the workplace HWB industry — employers, researchers, providers, payors and consultants — and insisting that, together, we represented a powerful force with the ability to positively impact the health of our nation. Building on the foundation that Bill laid, HERO's membership, and its voice and power as an agent for change, have increased dramatically over the past 20 years.

PAST RECIPIENTS

- 2011 – Michael O'Donnell, American Journal of Health Promotion

2012 – John Harris, MEd, FAWHP, Performance pH

2013 – David Anderson, PhD, StayWell

2014 – David Hunnicutt, PhD, WELCOA

2015 – Bill Baun, EPD, CWP, FAWHP, MD Anderson Cancer Center

2016 – Jerry Noyce

2017 – LaVaughn Palma-Davis, MA, University of Michigan
- 2018 – Shelly Wolff, MBA, Willis Towers Watson

2019 – Fikry W. Isaac, MD, MPH, FACOEM, WellWorld Consulting

2020 – Pamela Hymel, MD, MPH, FACOEM, Disney Parks, Experiences and Products (DPEP)

2021 – Raymond J. Fabius MD, DFACPE, Truven Health Analytics

2022 – Wendy D. Lynch, PhD, Lynch Consulting

2023 – K. Andrew Crighton, MD, Crighton Consulting Group

2024 – Michael Critelli, JD, MoveFlux

Jerry Noyce Executive Health Champion Award

This award honors a person of senior leadership status (CEO, CFO, VP) who has made an outstanding contribution towards the advancement of health and well-being within their company. HERO understands the importance of recognizing the corporate leaders who make the meaningful execution of employee wellness possible. As former CEO of a national provider and former CEO of HERO, Jerry Noyce has always put the practice of good health and well-being at the top of the corporate agenda. This award is presented annually to a person of senior leadership status (CEO, CFO, VP) who, like Jerry, has made outstanding contributions towards the advancement of workplace health & well being within their company. Jerry's leadership in the industry has modeled the behavior we want every executive to emulate. In his honor, we wish to recognize individuals who have been instrumental in the success of their company wellness program through professional dedication and a personal commitment to creating a culture of health.

PAST RECIPIENTS

- 2012 – Leon Gorman, L.L. Bean

2013 – Hank Orme, Lincoln Industries

2014 – James R. Ramsey, PhD, University of Louisville

2015 – Scott Peterson, EVP, CHRO, The Schwan Food Company

2016 – Jodi Leigh Berg, Vitamix

2017 – Catherine M. Baase, MD, The Dow Chemical Company
- 2018 – Elizabeth Bierbower, MPM, Humana

2019 – Craft O'Neal, O'Neal Industries, Inc. (ONI)

2020 – Shane Jackson, MBA, Jackson Healthcare

2021 – Joseph D. Kenner, MBA, Greyston

2023 – Dane Friend, JD, Baylor College of Medicine

2024 – Jerry Norcia and David Ruud, MBA, DTE Energy

Heart of HERO Award

This award honors a health and wellness practitioner (Wellness Directors, Health Managers, Human Resource) who has made an outstanding contribution towards the advancement of HWB within their company. The Heart of HERO Award recognizes health and wellness practitioners who have directly impacted the health and well-being of their organization through their demonstrated leadership, personal commitment to health, and systematic application of industry best practices.

PAST RECIPIENTS

- 2014 – Rebecca Kelly, PhD, The University of Alabama

2015 – Joni Troester, MA, MBA, University of Iowa

2016 – Jody Ensman, MS, University of Kentucky

2017 – Mark Poindexter, Shell Oil Company

2018 – Sheri Snow, MEd, RD, CDE, AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company

2019 – Philip DiRusso, MaineGeneral Medical Center Workplace Health
- 2020 – Patricia Benson, MEd, formerly University of Louisville

2021 – Julie Andrews, HP

2022 – Megan Hammes, MS, CHES, University of Iowa

2023 – Megan Amaya, PhD, CHES, NBC-HWC, Ohio State University

2024 – Karen Personett, DTE Energy



The HERO Workplace Health and Well-Being Awards honor dedication and commitment to the field, and acknowledge outstanding leadership, research, and practice of health and well-being. The HERO Awards honor leaders in five categories:

Bill Whitmer Leadership Award

Mark Dundon Research Award

Jerry Noyce Executive Health Champion Award

Heart of HERO Award

Healthy HERO Award

To nominate an individual, please  
visit the HERO Awards web page:  
<https://hero-health.org/forum/awards/>