



**Home Office**  
P.O. Box A-H 16 South River Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18703-0020  
Toll-Free 1-800-673-2465  
[www.guard.com](http://www.guard.com)

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**Contact:** Bob Thomas, Director of Communications  
570-825-9900, extension 6564, or e-mail [bthomas@guard.com](mailto:bthomas@guard.com)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **GUARD Receives Chamber’s *Healthy Workplace Award***

WILKES-BARRE, PA – GUARD Insurance Group’s health care initiative, WellGUARD, was recently recognized by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce during a *Healthy Workplace Awards* ceremony and a downtown *Walk/Run for Business*. The event began with a walk from Chuck Robbins’ Sporting Goods on South Main Street and ended at Public Square. Carl Witkowski, Executive Vice President of Information Systems and Chief Administrative Officer at GUARD, accepted the award from Dr. Stephen Rothstein, Medical Director for Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania, on behalf of the GUARD employees who helped plan, create, and/or participate in the program.

“To me, the fact that GUARD was nominated by our own employees and by one of our area’s foremost authorities – Dr. Peter P. Balsamo, Ph.D. (Vice President for Workforce and Community Development at Luzerne County Community College) – makes this recognition particularly significant.” Witkowski said. “We have been thrilled by the positive reception WellGUARD has gotten from our employees, and we are pleased to be able to sponsor and partner with our employees in an initiative that has been so positive. The process has been a lot of fun!”

The award recognized the numerous health-conscious programs GUARD has put into place since launching WellGUARD in January of 2006. Described by Witkowski as “An innovative path to long-term personal and financial wellness,” the initiative is designed to improve the well being of GUARD’s staff while simultaneously addressing rising health care costs. More than 91 percent of the organization’s employees participate and enjoy better health due to weight loss, smoking cessation, increased physical activity, enhanced education, and better nutrition.

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2 of 2

Some WellGUARD activities have included: a comprehensive health risk assessment completed on the premises; on-site screenings for blood pressure, blood glucose, body mass index, and cholesterol; free wellness coaching consultations; and a wide variety of educational opportunities ranging from brown bag lunches to on-line training and a co-sponsored health fair featuring numerous area vendors.

Headquartered in downtown Wilkes-Barre, GUARD Insurance Group provides workers' compensation coverage to approximately 33,000 businesses located in 22 states via a network of independent insurance agents and brokers. GUARD was named the number two best large place to work in the state in 2001 by the Best Places to Work in PA Program.

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Press Release