

**ADVANCE:** This release is embargoed until Monday, July 17, at 6 p.m.  
Please guard against premature use.



July 14, 2017

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** *The award winners have been notified and can be contacted for interviews immediately.*



## **NOVA SCOTIA ORGANIZATIONS RECOGNIZED FOR FOSTERING PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES**

*(Halifax, July 17, 2017)* – Local business, research, and health communities recognized the accomplishments of outstanding organizations at the 6th Nova Scotia Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards on July 17.

Four Nova Scotia companies were recognized for their achievements in developing and fostering supportive and healthy workplaces:

**--Jazz Aviation LP.** Jazz embraces its employees as its most valuable asset, driven by a commitment to creating a respectful, safe, healthy, and inclusive culture. They offer programming and employee-driven initiatives in diversity, suicide risk management, mental health training, safeTALK, peer supports, and work-life balance. They have a world-class pilot assistance peer support program, and they emphasize going above and beyond in creating a workplace that is enjoyable, flexible, and accommodating.

**--Master Merchant Systems (MMS).** MMS is committed to the health and wellness of its employees, with the CEO's motto being "nothing is sacred except doing the right thing". This commitment, and the company's dedication to wellness, pay equity and profit-sharing, is reflected in employees' high levels of involvement, engagement, and satisfaction. MMS provides comprehensive benefits and wellness initiatives, hosts regular social events, and encourages employee involvement. As a family-owned company, taking care of employees is deeply rooted in MMS' culture.

**--Emergency Medical Care (EMC) Inc.** EMC has many healthy workplace policies and initiatives, including their R2MR (Road to Mental Readiness) program, Strategic Resilience for First Responders training, employee feedback meetings with senior leadership, fatigue and flextime policies, and a Peer and Family Support line which is run by peer volunteers 24/7. They have a strong focus on growth and involvement, and have hired a Respectful Workplace Advisor to strengthen their commitment to employee health and wellbeing.

**--Dalhousie University.** Dal prides itself on its ongoing commitment to promote employee health and wellness. Dal offers a Healthy Workplace Award to recognize departments for their outstanding initiatives. They conduct a Quality of Work Life Survey to assess the organization's total health and to target areas for action. Inclusion, diversity, and leadership are all part of their strategic plan. They strive to create a supportive and collegial atmosphere where people can be at their best.

The awards honour high performing organizations that demonstrate a commitment to the psychological health and well-being of their employees.

“When we started with this program in 2004, the concept of a psychologically healthy workplace was relatively unknown” said Dr. Arla Day, chair of the Nova Scotia Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards committee. “Thirteen years later, it is great to see so many Nova Scotia workplaces developing innovative practices and encouraging thriving workplaces”.

“The research shows the link between mental and physical health, and when organizations support their employees and treat them well, it pays off in terms of overall health and productivity. We have moved from out-dated, negative views of the workplace to seeing the workplace as an ideal venue to help foster effective functioning and wellbeing.”

Nominee organizations completed an extensive, multi-phased process. The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards committee reviewed their programs and policies; interviewed management, committees, and employees; surveyed their employees; and conducted site visits of the workplaces.

Organizations were judged on:

- how they promote the physical and psychological health, safety, and wellness of employees,
- whether they are supportive and inclusive, and help employees balance their work and non-work demands,
- how they involve employees in decision-making, and encourage employee growth and development, and
- how they recognize employee accomplishments and initiatives.

“The review committee was impressed not only by the innovative programs these organizations are offering, but also by the demonstrated passion and commitment to employees’ physical and psychological health and well-being,” said Dr. Day.

“The commitment, dedication, and innovative policies of these Nova Scotia organizations show us how we all can become leaders in fostering psychologically healthy workplaces.”

The awards were handed out at a reception at **Saint Mary’s University on Monday, July 17, 2017, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

These awards are part of the American Psychological Association’s Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program, which is offered in more than 49 states and provinces. The Nova Scotian program is sponsored by American Psychological Association, the Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia, Saint Mary’s University, and the CN Centre for Occupational Health & Safety.

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