

# The NonProfit Times' 50 BEST NONPROFITS TO WORK FOR 2011



BY PAUL CLOLERY

**S**teven Nardizzi, president & CEO of the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) in Jacksonville, Fla., doesn't just try to encourage his employees to find fun in their work. He awards them. "If there's a great work environment that's fun and positive they're going to be much better at achieving our mission," he said.

WWP placed first in the second annual *The NonProfit Times' 50 Best Nonprofits To Work For* within the medium organizations category and first overall in the study.

*The NonProfit Times* again worked with the Best Companies Group in Harrisburg, Pa., to seek out the best nonprofit for which to work. Email messages were sent to approximately 100,000 employees at nonprofits seeking nominations. The organizations applied and went through several levels of screening conducted by Best.

Both management and staff completed surveys. Additional information was sought from outside the organization, from businesses that work with the organizations.

To be eligible for consideration, nonprofits had to meet the following criteria:

- Must be in operation a minimum of one year;
- Must be a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status;
- Have a facility in the United States; and,
- Have a minimum of 15 employees in the United States

There were a few exceptions. Management support organizations and consultancies formed under a tax-exempt umbrella could not compete for inclusion. Due to the large number of smaller organizations in the nonprofit sector, a "small-sized nonprofit" category was established to give nonprofits in this category a chance to compete. To ensure the credibility of the information, nonprofits in this category must have an 80 percent (or better) response rate from their employees filling out the survey.

Best conducted a simple yet thorough organizational assessment. The assessment is a two-part process designed to gather detailed data about each participating

nonprofit. In part one, the employer completes a questionnaire and in part two, employees complete a confidential survey.

The collected information from the two instruments is combined to produce a detailed set of data enabling the analysts to determine the strengths and opportunities of the participating nonprofits. The workplaces are ranked based on this data and then the Employer Benchmark Summary is returned to each participating organization.

The employer questionnaire is where important information is captured about nonprofit policies, practices and demographics. This portion of the assessment was sent out shortly after the registration deadline and was due before the employee surveys were sent.

The employer questionnaire was sent to the primary contact electronically. It was completed and submitted online to aid in the functionality and ease of the surveying process.

The Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey consisted of approximately 72 statements that employees responded to on a five-point agreement scale. The survey also includes two open-ended questions and seven demographic questions.

The results were analyzed and categorized according to eight core focus areas: Leadership and Planning, Corporate Culture and Communications, Role Satisfaction, Work Environment, Relationship with Supervisor, Training and Development, Pay and Benefits and Overall Engagement.

The majority of the employee surveys were handled online. However, paper based surveys were available to those nonprofits whose employees do not have online capabilities. For the online version, each employee received a unique Web-link via email. Nonprofits choosing the online version of the survey were asked to submit a list of employee email addresses via an upload portal. Best performed the random selection for online nonprofits having more than 250 employees. Best surveyed up to 400 randomly-selected employees depending on employee size.

So, here are *NPT's 50 Best Nonprofits To Work For In 2011*. *NPT*

## 2011 NPT Best Places To Work

Rank	Organization	Location	Employees	Industry
1	Wounded Warrior Project	Jacksonville, Fla.	118	Veterans Service
2	Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York	Lake Success, N.Y.	30	Wishgranting for Children
3	Community Food Bank	Tucson, Ariz.	108	Human Services
4	YearUp	Atlanta, Ga.	193	Education
5	Alzheimer's Association	Chicago, Ill.	250	Health
6	Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice	Venice, Fla.	17	Community Foundation
7	Boise Rescue Mission	Boise, Idaho	80	Human Services/Religious
8	PENCIL Foundation	Nashville, Tenn.	26	Education
9	Arts Midwest	Minneapolis, Minn	19	Arts and Culture
10	Natural Resources Defense Council	New York, N.Y.	388	Environmental
11	NICS/Oasis International Schools	Southaven, Miss.	22	International Education
12	Baptist Easley Hospital	Easley, S.C.	700	Healthcare
13	Nantucket Historical Association	Nantucket, Mass.	41	Historical Association/Museum
14	Adas Israel Congregation	Washington, D.C.	20	Religious
15	PENCIL	New York, N.Y.	22	Education
16	SightLife	Seattle, Wash.	64	Eye Tissue Bank
17	Home Start, Inc.	San Diego, Calif.	74	Social Services
18	National Multiple Sclerosis Society, PSC Chapter*	Carlsbad, Calif.	34	Health
19	Space Foundation	Colorado Springs	44	Education
20	LIVESTRONG	Austin, Texas	81	Healthcare - Service
21	Brighton Center	San Antonio, Texas	95	Early Childhood Intervention
22	Children's Law Center	Washington, D.C.	71	Legal Services
23	Educational Housing Services, Inc	Brooklyn, N.Y.	47	Student Housing
24	DoSomething.org	New York, N.Y.	18	Youth
25	Cross-Cultural Solutions	New Rochelle, N.Y.	33	International Volunteer Programs
26	Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau	Albuquerque, N.M.	39	Hospitality/Tourism
27	American Heart Association	Dallas, Texas	2,677	Health Funding/Education
28	The GRAMMY Foundation	Santa Monica, Calif.	22	Music
29	BBB serving Central, Coastal and SW Texas	Austin, Texas	48	Service
30	Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City	Kansas City, Mo.	25	Youth Development
31	MusiCares Foundation	Santa Monica, Calif.	26	Music
32	Visiting Nurse Service of New York	New York, N.Y.	4,070	Home Health Care
33	Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)	Alexandra, Va.	91	Association
34	Midelfort Clinic	Eau Claire, Wisc.	1,448	Healthcare
35	PRS, Inc.	McLean, Va.	57	Human Services/Mental Health
36	Child Guidance & Family Solutions	Akron, Ohio	175	Mental Health Service
37	American Councils for International Education	Imperial Beach, Calif.	122	Education
38	The Family Place	Dallas, Texas	125	Social Service
39	Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation	St. Ann, Mo.	124	Health, Transplant
40	Harlem RBI	New York, N.Y.	62	Youth Development
41	Luther Midelfort Northland	Eau Claire, Wisc	405	Healthcare
42	Youth Villages	Memphis, Tenn.	2,251	Social Services
43	People Incorporated of Virginia	Abingdon, Va.	242	Community Action
44	Palm Beach Habilitation Center, Inc.	Lake Worth, Fla.	83	Social Services
45	Solar Energy Industries Association	Washington, D.C.	26	Association
46	U.S. Lacrosse	Baltimore, Md.	59	Athletics
47	International Fellowship of Christians and Jews	Chicago, Ill.	80	Humanitarian
48	Van Andel Institute	Grand Rapids, Mich.	270	Life Sciences
49	San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind	San Antonio, Texas	493	Manufacturing
50	KaBOOM!	Washington, D.C.	74	Community Development

\* Pacific South Coast Chapter

## SMALL ORGANIZATIONS

## Who Says Work Can't Be Fun?

Sense of belonging boosted staffs at small organizations



Yes Virginia, there are people who love their jobs and are happy to go to the office, such as the teams from (from left) ArtsMidwest, The Grammy Foundation and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice.

BY SAMUEL J. FANBURG

**A**ria Finger, chief operating officer of DoSomething.org in New York City, rarely has trouble convincing staff to stay late, but encounters issues when telling people to go home. "I think a lot of people perceive 'professional' and 'fun' as contradictable terms, however the environment we have created is conducive to both," said Finger.

"We have created an open and transparent place to work which gives people a stake in the work they are producing," she said.

The approach has paid off as DoSomething.org, with 18 full-time employees, ranked 12th in *The NonProfit Times*' small organizations category and 24th overall in *The NonProfit Times*' 50 Best Nonprofits To Work For in 2011. For the purpose of the study, small organizations are categorized as having 15 to 49 employees.

According to this year's survey of the *Best Nonprofits To Work For*, a strong and focused corporate culture was seen as an integral aspect in having a productive work environment. Nonprofits not making the list placed in the 92nd percentile in believing there is a spirit of cooperation in the organization, whereas the nonprofits that did make the list were in the 93rd percentile. Small organizations not making the list ranked in the 90th percentile in having confidence in the leadership of the organizations, as compared to nonprofits on the list coming in the 91st percentile.

Employees also look at personal valuation as important attribute in working at their organization. Organizations making the list placed in the 92nd percentile in making their staff feel valued in their role, ranked in the 93rd percentile in having employees feel like a person as opposed to a number and were in the 89th percentile in having staff believe they have enough authority to make decisions they need to make.

The openness and transparency of DoSomething.org trickles down to all staffers. From the moment visitors walk into the office, they'll see goals and benchmarks posted on display boards to articulate the aims of the organization's efforts.

Participation is highly encouraged by

all levels of management. One unique benefit to DoSomething.org is that after 2½ years of service employees with a 1-year commitment to further service, can take a six-month paid sabbatical to volunteer for a cause of their choosing.

"It's really able to recharge employees," said Finger. "We are also able to view other employees in a different light and give them time to shine while other are pursuing their own interests."

When Susan Chandler, associate director, of ArtsMidwest, went back to work after the summer, she realized that much of her staff had skills that had not been utilized. "We were becoming increasingly aware that people were becoming specific to their own programs and not letting their knowledge cross over to other subjects," said Chandler.

From this came "Camp ArtsMidwest." For a day and a half, Chandler and her 19 person staff, transformed the Minneapolis, Minn., organization's conference room into a modern day camp with a campfire broadcast over their television, S'mores for a late afternoon snack, and staff members demonstrating to their colleagues ideas they would find applicable to their own programs.

Not only was the "camp" successful in pooling information from staff members, it also increased the social capital among staff members.

"It was fascinating," said ArtsMidwest's Executive Director, David Fraher. "People stopped looking at each other as co-workers and saw each other as potential resources for new information."

Capitalizing on this strong sense of mutual respect felt by employees and an open office culture, ArtsMidwest has ranked 9th overall and 4th in the small organizations category.

Christina Cassidy, manager of communications at The Grammy Foundation in Santa Monica, Calif., credits the foundation's event-oriented activities with the strong sense of community and family found among staff.

"When we are all working on a tight deadline," said Cassidy, "crazy things happen. We almost look at these events as use going into battle together. Through that we are able to build a different kind of camaraderie. We know that we are sharing something unique and special."

The foundation, ranking 28th in *NPT*'s 50 Best Places and 15th within the small organization category, comes from the joy

of working in the music industry and the staffs ability to demonstrably change people's lives everyday said Senior Vice President Kristen Madsen.

This strong connection translates into a corporate culture that has the 22 staff members relying on each other. Employees already in the nonprofit fill 50 percent of internal hires, and nobody left the nonprofit voluntarily in 2010.

The staff at the Gulf Coast Foundation of Venice goes to work knowing they can make a difference, said Greg Luberecki, director of marketing and communications. He credits this devotion to goals to a flat organization structure adherent to the Gulf Coast Foundation in Venice, Fla.

"The management team makes sure to communicate internally how each employee's contribution helps make the work we do possible," Luberecki said. "Staff members feel empowered to take this responsibility. People notice a definitive energy when they walk through the office and meet our staff."

This energy and the 17 person staff's commitment to its mission statement propelled The Gulf Coast Foundation to 6th overall and second within the small organization category.

Recognizing that The Gulf Coast Foundation is a competitive working environment with intense deadlines, Luberecki added that the charity has programs and activities that give staffers a chance to relax. "When we brought in a record amount in new donations to the foundation, we all were given a day off," said Luberecki. "We also have brown bag lunches and retreats."

Employee benefits at the charity include a dental plan, which is paid for by the charity and a 401(k) preparing employees for eventual retirement.

Keeping the working environment competitive and fun is a challenge, but it all comes down to a selecting the correct staff, says Luberecki. "There's a distinct culture here, and hiring decisions begin and end with making sure that a prospective employee will thrive in that culture. We all support one another, both in work and on a personal level." *NPT*

## SMALL ORGANIZATIONS (15-49 employees)

Rank	Organization	Employees
1	Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York Inc.	30
2	Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice	17
3	PENCIL Foundation	26
4	Arts Midwest	19
5	NICS/Oasis International Schools	22
6	Nantucket Historical Association	41
7	Adas Israel Congregation	20
8	PENCIL	22
9	National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Pacific South Coast Chapter	34
10	Space Foundation	44
11	Educational Housing Services, Inc	47
12	DoSomething.org	18
13	Cross-Cultural Solutions	33
14	Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau	39
15	The GRAMMY Foundation	22
16	BBB serving Central, Coastal and Southwest Texas	48
17	Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City	25
18	MusiCares Foundation	26
19	Solar Energy Industries Association	26

MEDIUM ORGANIZATIONS

# Relieving Healthcare Insurance Concerns Allows Employees To Focus On Work



Working in teams is what creates a great environment at (left) Wounded Warrior Project and YearUp.

BY KRISTIE CATAFI

Managers at The Wounded Warrior Project in Jacksonville, Fla., try to provide an atmosphere where employees know they are cared about. "Our staff is tremendous at fulfilling its mission everyday and we try to empower them and treat them the way we would want to be treated," said Steven Nardizzi, president & CEO of the organization.

WWP placed first in *The NonProfit*

*Times' 50 Best Nonprofits To Work For* within the medium organizations category and first overall in the study. For the purpose of the study, medium employers were categorized as having 50 to 249 employees. Employing 118 people, the organization had an 85 percent retention rate for full time employees during 2010.

According to the study, 97 percent of the 21 nonprofits in the medium group said staff was willing to give extra effort to help their company succeed. Some 89 per-

cent believed that the staff was given enough authority to make their own decisions and 89 percent believed there was a distinct spirit felt throughout the whole organization. In addition, staff at 94 percent of the organizations in the medium category understood their own importance of their role within the organization.

Offering its employees a tuition reimbursement program, the WWP has an on-site fitness facility that includes 24-hour access to showers, kitchen and leadership

workshops. WWP also fully pays their employees and dependents' healthcare benefits. "It's really a family approach to health and wellness that ties back to our warriors," Nardizzi said. "It's very difficult to tell people you need to take care of this person and then not do the same for them."

WWP receives nominations each quarter from the staff for co-workers based on the organization's five core values: fun, integrity, loyalty, innovation and service. Five

Medium Organizations, page 20

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## MEDIUM ORGANIZATIONS

Continued from page 19

winners for each core value are chosen and given the option of \$2,000 or five days paid time off.

"I don't know too many organizations that award you for having fun in the work place," Nardizzi said.

Bill Carnegie, president and CEO of the Community Food Bank in Tucson, Ariz., attributes the group's success to a bottom-up philosophy. "For management, I consider the vice presidents and myself to be at the bottom of the pyramid rather than the top."

The Community Food Bank placed third in the study, and second in the medium organizations category. The 108 employees are offered flexible scheduling, depending on the position, have an option to work from home one or two days per week and soon will have access to car-pooling services. "We are also looking at different ways to see what the needs of the staff might be and how we can help them enjoy their position more," said Carnegie.

Whereas the average food bank during the past five years increased distribution by 36 percent, the Community Food Bank takes pride in knowing that it increased its distribution 106 percent and gives credit to their employees. "It was a significant milestone. This year, we're expanding our

summer meals programs, opening up a new farm so we can produce more healthy food and make it available to low income families in the community," Carnegie said.

Employees have the option to choose from two healthcare plans. Under one plan, the organization pays 90 percent for employees and dependents, while the other covers 95 percent of expenses. The

idea is to have one plan for employees with larger families and the employees themselves drove the other plan for younger people. Both plans cover disability, dental and vision.

"Our employees really feel they are a part of the organization. They have a voice and we listen to them and they feel valued," Carnegie said. "We certainly have

some people who leave for reasons like going back to school or were only here temporarily. But, we receive so many applications when we post a job listing because people know that we're one of these great nonprofits that does great work and does good by their employees and people want to work here."

Founder and CEO Gerald Chertavian of YearUp said the organization's clear mission, values, honesty and respect for each other makes employees want to go to work every day. "We are recruiting individuals who are deeply passionate about our mission," Chertavian said. "Every single person commits to work with students."

The group, with affiliates around the nation, dedicates its work to teaching young adults between 18 and 24-years-old. It placed fourth in *Best Places To Work* and third in the medium group. The organization has grown from staffing just four employees to staffing 193 in 2010.

The nonprofit offers employees 100 percent medical and dental coverage, a 401(k) retirement plan, short and long term disability, four weeks vacation time after a year of employment and an additional \$2,000 every year that can be added to salary or for professional resources.

"Part of our review process is to see what you want to improve on next year,"

MEDIUM ORGANIZATIONS (50-249 employees)		
Rank	Organization	Employees
1	Wounded Warrior Project	118
2	Community Food Bank	108
3	YearUp	193
4	Boise Rescue Mission	80
5	SightLife	64
6	Home Start, Inc.	74
7	LIVESTRONG	81
8	Brighton Center	95
9	Children's Law Center	71
10	Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)	91
11	PRS, Inc.	57
12	Child Guidance & Family Solutions	175
13	American Councils for International Education	122
14	The Family Place	125
15	Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation	124
16	Harlem RBI	62
17	People Incorporated of Virginia	242
18	Palm Beach Habilitation Center, Inc.	83
19	US Lacrosse	59
20	International Fellowship of Christians and Jews	80



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# 50 BEST NONPROFITS TO WORK FOR IN 2011

Chertavian said. "Maybe you're working in an area that speaks Spanish as a first language, you can take that extra money to take some lessons." Employees also use this money for tuition reimbursement, project management classes or other classes of a subject that they are interested in teaching.

In addition to retreats, potluck dinners, recognition awards, holiday parties and softball tournaments, Year Up wants employees to have a balance between home and work. "We want every person here to get an A as a worker or mother, father, husband, wife, community member and family member," Chertavian said. "So we understand that getting an A at work is only one of the A's you get in life and we understand



**Teamwork is an essential element at both the Community Food Bank in Tucson, Ariz., and SightLife in Seattle, Wash.**

that those are at time the first priority."

For many employees at SightLife, giving children a chance to see the world isn't just a figure of speech it's a reality.

The Seattle, Wash.-based nonprofit supporting eye banks and cornea transplants in under developing countries, placed 16th in the study and 5th in the medium group. President & CEO Monty Montoya said the organization is only successful be-

cause of the "high quality people who want to change the world." SightLife pays the healthcare premiums for its 64 employees and dependents, which Montoya thinks is a big part of what keeps his employees happy.

To balance the difficulties of the job, SightLife celebrates its success and employee accomplishments. SightLife just celebrated being one of the top providers in transplants in the United States for the past 10 years. There are also year-end galas and a holiday party every January where

there are vacation giveaways. The organization recognizes every employee's five-year anniversary in the organization and gives the person an appreciation award.

SightLife has employees who work 24/7 all year round. "As you can imagine, it's a pretty tough job," Montoya said. "There's the physically demanding aspect of it, having people working all day and night and then the emotional aspect of grief and sense of loss. Even for the hospital people, working in that environment is tough." *NPT*



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LARGE ORGANIZATIONS

# The Suggestion Box Goes Electronic



For all intents and purposes, everyone has management responsibilities at (from left) the Natural Resources Defense Council, the American Heart Association and Luther Midelfort.

BY SAMUEL J. FANBURG AND KRISTIE CATTAFI

When President Obama signed the National Alzheimer's Project Act into law this past January, the Alzheimer's Association had a celebration to show employees how much the hard work was appreciated.

"We try to really celebrate success and try to help employees know there a large part of what's trying to be accomplished," said Angela Geiger, chief strategy officer for the Alzheimer's Association.

The Chicago-based organization placed 5th in the NonProfit Times' Top 50 Nonprofits To Work For in 2011 and first in the large group category. Large organizations, for the purpose of this study, are groups

with at least 250 employees.

According to the study, out of the 10 nonprofits included in the large category, 93 percent of employees said they understand the importance of their role to the success of their organization, 88 percent said they have confidence in the organization's leadership and 90 percent said their supervisor is open to hearing their opinion or feedback.

The 250 employees at the Alzheimer Association's national office have flexible scheduling and the organization's paid time off policy now includes taking off for a sick child, parent or transitioning a parent into a care-giving facility. The long-standing policy of allowing employees to leave early or take off from work for school visitations has been extended to in-

clude elder care visits. Every month the group has an afternoon celebration for birthdays, new hires and anniversaries.

Employees are also offered Weight Watchers at work, a walking club, discounts at local fitness centers, free blood screenings and flu shots.

There is a unique alignment between the mission of the organization and the benefits program. "The fact that elder care is really an emerging, life balancing issue, its highlighted that the Alzheimer's Association create a benefit design that really reflects the need in the work place," Geiger said.

At the American Heart Association in Dallas, Bill Achenbach, vice president of human resources, contends that an adherence to a mission statement is one of the

strongest retention mechanisms in keeping the staff happy and productive. "I think part of the reason why people enjoying working here is because the environment we create has a high level of interdependence and the staff has a strong affinity for one another," said Achenbach.

Positioning themselves as a place where new ideas are nurtured and respected, the AHA placed 27th in the overall list, and number four in the large organizations category.

Building employee's expertise is a high priority for the managerial staff at the AHA. At the American Heart University, an online educational tool, employees and their family members have the ability to take courses that enable them to build ca-

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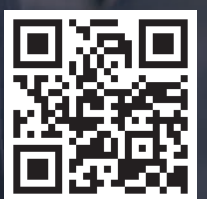


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capacity in their positions, along with preparing them for opportunities outside the AHA organization.

"We have found the program to be a pretty terrific tool," said Achenbach. "Not only has this tool been able to build potential for personal growth, but builds the relationships employees have with the AHA."

This investment in their employee's education has produced dividends as staff members filled 22 percent of positions when they open up. Additionally, as Achenbach said, the university provides the organization with a competitive advantage in attracting new talent.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in New York City creates a culture and sense of community within their organization that has employees staying with them for 20 to 25 years. "They are supported in their work and are free to do their work," said NRDC President Frances Beinecke. "We are really sending people out to their own job without micromanaging."

The NRDC placed second in the large group category and 10th in the NPT Top 50. The group has 388 employees and is bringing in new people all the time, Beinecke said. They added 100 people in the past couple of years and are continuing to bring in new and younger people.

The NRDC also tries to strike a balance



National Walk To End Alzheimer's team members.

## LARGE ORGANIZATIONS (250 or more employees)

Rank	Organization	Employees
1	Alzheimer's Association	250
2	Natural Resources Defense Council	388
3	Baptist Easley Hospital	700
4	American Heart Association	2,677
5	Visiting Nurse Service of New York	4,070
6	Midelfort Clinic	1,448
7	Luther Midelfort Northland	405
8	Youth Villages	2,251
9	Van Andel Institute	270
10	San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind	493

between work and fun by having holiday parties, baking contests, softball teams, wine tastings, picnics and retreats.

The organization provides 100 percent reimbursement for in-network

health insurance, Lasik coverage and offers three times annual salary for life insurance. "This is an intense working environment so we look for things that can relieve the stress and connect people

in the departments they work in. They feel part of the whole enterprise and look for ways to connect with them," she said.

Looking for new ways to communicate and solicit ideas from employees, Blythe Rinaldi, vice president of human resources at the Luther Midelfort Northland Hospital in Eau Claire, Wisc., listened to staff and created a blog where employees have a soapbox to advocate for their own ideas and ways to improve the organization.

"Part of what makes us a great organization to work for," said Rinaldi, "is that we always strive to a better job in listening to our staff. Having an open door policy, to us, means more than having an 'open door.' Recognition events and collaborative forums are ways for the staff to feel like when they are talking, they are being listened to."

Having an open mind has given the staff at Luther Midelfort Northland an implicit trust in their managerial staff, with only 5 percent voluntary turnover in 2010, as opposed to the industry's 16.9 percent voluntary turnover in the same year.

"In the end, our primary value is taking care of the needs of the patient," said Rinaldi. "By minimizing the impact of the economy, we have really created a collaborative environment where employees are able to perform their jobs to the best of their ability." *NPT*



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