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## **HEALTHWISE COMMUNICATIONS INC. WINS CHAMPION FOR CHANGE AWARD**

### ***Recognized for Environmental Responsibility***



KELOWNA, BC – Healthwise Communications Inc., a Kelowna based company and staunch advocate of environmental accountability in health care, received a “Champion for Change Award” in Baltimore, MD. This award was presented by Practice Greenhealth, a North American organization committed to environmentally responsible health care, when it honored its top performers at the Environmental Excellence Awards late last week.

“This award is a reflection of the commitment Healthwise makes to their clients and community, to protect patient health and preserve the environment,” said Anna Gilmore-Hall, Executive Director, Practice Greenhealth.

“Our company helps hospitals, health clinics and physician offices across North America reduce their environmental footprint by looking at their energy use, waste habits and on-site toxins. Healthwise recognizes the importance of providing environmentally sound services and takes the responsibility seriously,” said President, Aura Rose. “Health professionals across Canada are recognizing the direct link between the environment and health and we are proud to work with them to reduce their environmental footprint.”

The Champion for Change award is reserved for organizational partners supplying health care products or services that are considerate of the earth and its resources. Winners of the award have demonstrated success in greening their own organization while assisting hospitals committed to improving their environmental performance.

Practice Greenhealth selected Healthwise for the award to recognize their work in several areas. The company’s biggest success came with an evaluation of their internal carbon footprint; after which they concentrated on reducing both travel and paper.

“As a consulting company our biggest “waste” is paper, and while paper is easily recycled, the first of the 3 Rs is Reduce, so it seemed only natural to make that our primary goal in 2009,” said Rose. “We were able to reduce the total amount of paper purchased by well over 50%, by doing things like electronic banking and billing, and submitting proposals and projects electronically. We also made a conscious decision to purchase a secondary data back-up, to save and work from material on-line.”

The company's green platform didn't stop there. Healthwise worked closely with clients to reduce the need to travel, doing more work on-line and over the phone work (a win-win as it reduces costs to the client) and purchased trees through Trees for the Future to offset the travelling required. Rose also volunteers as a Steering Committee member on the Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare and writes articles on her own time to promote the green agenda. To further environmental education she has presented at a number of conferences, including CleanMed, EcoCare and Building Sustainable Communities.

"In many ways we see our role as one of education and change management," said Rose. "We want our clients to have the most up to date information so they don't reinvent the wheel. Hospitals are all at different levels of weaving sustainability into their business plan, and we help them see the possibilities, the benefits and challenges to do this work. Going green is really about changing habits and ways of doing things."

"For a small company, Healthwise is doing big things for health care and the environment," said Gilmore-Hall. "It's companies like these that can help the healthcare sector incorporate environmental responsibility into every aspect of their work, reducing energy, waste and toxins and thus improving the health of our communities."

Rose, who also co-owns House of Rose Winery in Kelowna, believes that hospitals have a lot of work to do on the environmental front. "When we took over the winery last spring, the first thing we did was turn it organic. It makes sense to protect the soil. I want hospitals to see that same connection, between the environment and the health of the patients they serve and the communities they live in."

The Environmental Excellence awards were held in conjunction with CleanMed, a Global Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Health Care. Awards were presented in seven categories and recognize individuals and organizations that have contributed new ideas and advancements that protect the environment in all aspects of health care.

Practice Greenhealth is a leading membership and networking organization for healthcare institutions that have made a commitment to sustainable, eco-friendly practices. Members include hospitals, healthcare systems, businesses and other stakeholders engaged in the greening of healthcare to improve the health of patients, staff and the environment. For more information visit [www.practicegreenhealth.org](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org).

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