



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 13, 2022

Dear Gold Star Standards of Excellence Organizations,

Since, 2010 Breathe Easy has presented the Gold Star Standards of Excellence (GSSE) recognition program to annually encourage, support and acknowledge Maine's hospitals, healthcare organizations, behavioral health organizations and institutions of higher education for addressing smoking and tobacco use by creating, adopting and maintaining smoke and tobacco-free policies. This voluntary program includes evidence-based, environment-specific standards for organizations to meet through written, sustainable policies and procedures.

Breathe Easy continues to annually evaluate the evidence-based, environment-specific standards and overall program objectives and procedures to support healthy behaviors and lifestyles through tobacco-free environments. Historically, Breathe Easy has presented the GSSE program for Hospitals and Healthcare organizations during the fall and Behavioral Health organizations and Institutions of Higher Education during the spring.

Starting in the spring of 2023, Breathe Easy will combine the fall and spring recognition programs into one annual comprehensive recognition program. Creating one annual recognition program will strengthen the unification and integration of addressing smoking and tobacco use throughout Maine's hospitals, healthcare organizations, behavioral health organizations and institutions of higher education.

Breathe Easy would like to offer a special thank you to all of our previous applicants and awardees for your past, current and future participation in our GSSE voluntary recognition program. We are committed to recognizing your ongoing commitment of addressing smoking and tobacco use and we look forward to offering the GSSE program for all settings in the spring of 2023. Organizations who have received GSSE awards in past years are encouraged to reapply for continued recognition of ongoing commitment of addressing smoking and tobacco use. Please visit our website for programmatic updates as we approach 2023. We greatly appreciate your continued collaboration and making our communities the healthiest in America!

Sincerely,

Barbara Ginley

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www.BreatheEasyMaine.org/GSSE

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