

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil Web: sd.ng.mil



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 8, 2020

Sanford Health recipient of national Freedom Award

WASHINGTON – Sanford Health of South Dakota is one of 15 recipients for the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, in recognition of the organization’s exemplary support for its National Guard and Reserve employees.

The Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve, or ESGR, announced Sanford Health as one of the recipients for the award, which recognizes civilian employers who went far beyond what the federal law requires to support their military employees.

“I am proud to recognize these 15 outstanding civilian employers,” Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper said in an ESGR press release. “The citizen warriors of the National Guard and Reserve have evolved from a strategic reserve to become an integral component of the operational force. Having employers who support their military service is critical to their success and the success of our National Defense Strategy. We salute these exemplary employers for their steadfast commitment to their Guard and Reserve employees, their patriotism, and their contributions to the defense and security of our great nation.”

Sanford Health was nominated for the award by one of their employees, South Dakota National Guard Staff Sgt. Seth Fredrickson. Sanford Health along with the 14 other recipients were selected from 2,623 nominations received from Guardsmen and Reservists nationwide. The Freedom Award began in 1996 under the auspices of ESGR to recognize exceptional employer support, with 295 honorees to date.

“Sanford is an organization that truly cares about its service members, be they active duty or reserve, team member or patient,” said Fredrickson. “Their goal is to serve those who have served others. Whether it is offering benefits while deployed, presenting a space where veterans can gather as patients, providing the human touch by visiting those in our care, or working with Yellow Ribbon events and Reserve component training. The organization lives the values we instill in each other.”

“Year in and year out, Sanford Health has demonstrated a commitment to our nation’s National Guard and Reserve component members and their families, as well as our veterans,” said Jim White, South Dakota ESGR state chair. “Sanford Health’s commitment to our military service members starts with a deliberate, focused, targeted, consistently and publicly demonstrated approach to supporting the men and women who serve and have served our nation.”

Sanford Health supports their military employees by providing exceptional support in all states and across all of its business locations. Sanford Health is a health care provider with 44 medical centers, 482 clinics and more than 200 senior living facilities throughout 26 states, which employs nearly 50,000 people throughout its network.

Sanford Health has grown to be the largest employer in South Dakota. Sanford Health recognizes their citizen soldiers with the ‘Achievement in Excellence’ award. They have also added the Sanford Veteran Employee of the Year Award, given out to a current or former service member for professional

-more-

[facebook.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard](https://www.facebook.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard) twitter.com/SD_Guard [flickr.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard](https://www.flickr.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard)

www.instagram.com/sdnationalguard

performance. Sanford recently awarded three out of four Veteran and Military scholarships to Guard or Reserve members. These scholarships are not only for Sanford employees, but also for any Guard and Reserve members.

Sanford Health's president and CEO, Kelby Krabbenhoft, signed a Statement of Support that was distributed to all clinics, hospitals and administrators offices throughout the company. By signing this symbolic, non-legally binding Statement of Support, Sanford Health is publicly affirming their support for the men and women of whom they employ that also serve their state and nation.

“At Sanford Health, we consider it a calling to care for those who are sick, injured or infirm,” said Krabbenhoft in an ESGR press release. “In my mind, the only higher calling is answered by those who volunteer to put their lives on the line in service to our country. Demonstrating our support and gratitude to employees who serve in the military makes Sanford stronger as an organization and gives me a great sense of personal pride.”

The award will be presented to Sanford Health by Jim White.

Sanford Health is the fifth South Dakota business to receive this award (Black Hills Corporation, 2015; Winner School District, 2008; South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, 2006; South Dakota State University, 2005).

For more information about the Freedom Award and this year's Freedom Award recipients, visit www.FreedomAward.mil. To learn more about ESGR, visit www.ESGR.mil.

###

About ESGR

ESGR is a Department of Defense program that develops and promotes supportive work environments for Service members in the Reserve Components through outreach, recognition, and educational opportunities that increase awareness of applicable laws. It also provides assistance in resolving conflicts between Service members and their employers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact the SDNG Public Affairs Office at (605) 737-6721 or e-mail ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil.