

NCH becomes first Fla. Blue Zones worksite employer

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The NCH Healthcare System has become the first employer in the state of Florida to achieve worksite certification with the Blue Zones Project.

The Collier County-based hospital, through its president and chief executive officer, Dr. Allen Weiss, introduced the health and longevity initiative to the region several years ago.

A campaign for Collier County and

Bonita Springs to work toward Blue Zones recognition began in 2015 with NCH leading the effort.

In addition to providing financial support for the community-wide undertaking, the hospital system instituted changes to its own workplace culture to achieve Blue Zones status.

A ribbon cutting ceremony to recognize NCH as the first employer in the state to become a certified Blue Zones worksite was held Wednesday outside of NCH Baker Hospital Down-

town at the Telford Center.

The hospital system also is the first healthcare system in the nation to earn the certification, according to project officials.

"At NCH, we are very proud to be the first certified Blue Zone worksite in Florida," Weiss said in a news release. "Well-being is our mission and our promise for those we serve and for our employees."

More than half of NCH's workforce, about 2,150 employees, signed

the Blue Zones personal pledge to improve their health by incorporating better practices in their daily lives.

NCH has seen a 2.8 percent improvement in its employee well-being measured by Gallup-Sharecare, according to project officials.

Several of leaders with the national Blue Zones Project and its partner organization, Tennessee-based Healthways, attended the ceremony at NCH.