

OGLETREE DEAKINS HR PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Ann Stevens: Culture Contributor

By Rebecca Patrick and Symone C. Skrzycki

In an era when human resources leaders are navigating unprecedented change – balancing workforce well-being, organizational agility and long-term strategy – the impact of thoughtful, people-centered leadership has never been more critical. Today’s HR professionals are not only stewards of policy and compliance, but architects of culture and drivers of business performance.

Ann Stevens, the total rewards director at Parkview Health in Fort Wayne, exemplifies that mindset. Her employer hails her as a decisive leader and flexible change agent with a collaborative approach. Stevens was lauded as the Indiana Chamber’s Ogletree Deakins Human Resources Professional of the Year last spring.

The honor recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to their workplace over the past year through implementation of best practices, organization design and effectiveness, and alignment and accomplishment of the strategic direction of their company. It spotlights those who are also dedicated to giving back to the community and the HR profession.

“Ann has proven herself to be an integral part of the team at Parkview Health since joining the organization in 2000,” says Indiana Chamber President and CEO Vanessa Green Sinderson. “The scope of her career experience is extensive, and her value to Parkview is evident by the fact that she’s advanced through the ranks there during a time of great challenges – and opportunities – for human resources executives everywhere.”

At Parkview, Stevens is responsible for directing the design and administration of all compensation and benefits programs and policies, including job evaluation, salary administration, short- and long-term incentive programs, health and welfare, and retirement plans.

Parkview Health is a non-profit, community-based health system serving more than 20 counties in northeast Indiana and northwest Ohio with a population of more than 1.3 million. Parkview is the region’s largest employer, with 16,000 employees at 14 hospitals and more than 200 outpatient centers and physician offices.

With an organizational mission of improving health and inspiring well-being, Stevens has taken that to heart.

“Ann is also extremely supportive of providing resources from a mental health perspective,” imparts Hallie Custer, Parkview Health vice president of human resources.

“She and her team have rolled out a variety of (related) resources



Ann Stevens’ Parkview Health colleague Kristen Ruble, left, accepted the Ogletree Deakins Human Resources Professional of the Year award on her behalf from Bonnie Martin of Ogletree Deakins.

such as offering the Calm app (to manage stress and anxiety) for free and holding off-site ‘renewal workshops’ where co-workers are able to take time away from work to focus on their personal wellness and resiliency while being paid for their time.”

In addition, Stevens was instrumental in creating an internal website dedicated solely to financial well-being, offering colleagues support and resources to assist them along that journey.

“Ann is extremely smart, conscientious and thoughtful about her work,” Custer stresses. “She is cognizant of removing barriers to make things easier, thinks of how we can put our coworkers first and encourages her team to provide hands-on assistance to each other. This allows us to create a culture at Parkview where our coworkers feel appreciated and supported.”

Stevens has led the creation of several new benefit initiatives at Parkview. Among them is a popular internal pet therapy program to train employees and their dogs to be therapeutic teams – for use in the Parkview system – at no charge to the employee.

“Our coworkers are well-served by Ann and the work she does to not only make sure Parkview’s benefits are implemented well and run smoothly, but to always be looking for that next opportunity to improve well-being and job satisfaction,” Custer adds. “She always has the (individual) front of mind in her daily work in human resources.”

RESOURCE: Parkview Health at www.parkview.com

Spotlight Your HR Leader

Through March 9, the Indiana Chamber is accepting nominations for the 2026 Ogletree Deakins Human Resources Professional of the Year. The honor will be presented during a luncheon at the 62nd Annual Indiana HR Conference at the Indiana Convention Center in late April.

The award is open to all full-time human resources practitioners in Indiana. (See criteria in story.)

Nominations can be made via self-nomination or by a peer, subordinate, supervisor or other but must be accompanied by a sponsorship letter from the nominee’s organization.

Submissions can be made at www.indianachamber.com/hrpro. Please send questions to Danielle Hinton at dhinton@indianachamber.com.