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## **DWD Teams Up with Walgreens to Create Training, Job Opportunities for People with Disabilities**

***DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and provider agencies join four Milwaukee Walgreens stores for initial phase of Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiation (REDI)***

MILWAUKEE – Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson joined Walgreens officials, providers and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) program managers today to kick off the drugstore chain's **Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI)** at the Walgreens located at 6030 W. Oklahoma Avenue in Milwaukee. The store is one of four area Walgreens to be involved with REDI. The program's goal is to help people with disabilities gain retail and customer service skills that can potentially lead to new job opportunities.

"Today, Walgreens is partnering with Wisconsin to provide opportunities for people with disabilities who face substantial barriers to employment," said Lt. Governor Kleefisch. "We thank Walgreens for its initiative in developing this new program."

DWD Secretary Newson said: "Wisconsin is one of 12 states involved in the first phase of REDI's in-store training, and we are excited to work with Walgreens on this unique initiative. This is a rewarding program for job seekers, Walgreens, DVR and the community organizations and vocational rehabilitation agencies who train and develop candidates."

In 2010, Walgreens first piloted REDI in Texas. After training more than 200 people and seeing 66 percent of REDI graduates recommended for hire, the program grew to more than 150 stores throughout Texas, New York and Connecticut. Today, Wisconsin is one of 12 states involved in the first phase of the national REDI launch, and the program is expected to reach all states by the end of 2013.

In Milwaukee, two community organizations, Adonai Employment Service, Inc. and Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, were recruited by DVR to work with Walgreens. Employees of the two organizations began a "train-the-trainer" class on May 14 to prepare for the first training class, which begins today, May 29.

"These valuable career skills will help candidates be successful in any retail setting," said Walgreens Senior Vice President Randy Lewis. "As we redefine the traditional drugstore to become America's first choice for health and daily living, our employees and initiatives play a critical role in that journey. We continue to learn incredible things from everyone involved in this initiative and believe in the power of ability."

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides employment services and counseling to people with disabilities who face substantial barriers to employment. In 2011, DVR served 40,383 Wisconsin residents with disabilities and placed nearly 3,000 people in jobs. For more information regarding DVR and its programs: <http://www.dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/>

### **About Walgreens**

As the nation's largest drugstore chain with fiscal 2011 sales of \$72 billion, Walgreens ([www.walgreens.com](http://www.walgreens.com)) vision is to become America's first choice for health and daily living. Each day, Walgreens provides nearly 6 million customers the most convenient, multichannel access to consumer goods and services and trusted, cost-effective pharmacy, health and wellness services and advice in communities across America. Walgreens scope of pharmacy services includes retail, specialty, infusion, medical facility and mail service, along with respiratory services. These services improve health outcomes and lower costs for payers including employers, managed care organizations, health systems, pharmacy benefit managers and the public sector. The company operates 7,855 drugstores in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Take Care Health Systems is a Walgreens subsidiary that is the largest and most comprehensive manager of worksite health and wellness centers and in-store convenient care clinics, with more than 700 locations throughout the country.