



Laura Putnam with the Blue Cross team after her keynote presentation

# Weaving well-being into workplace culture

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—Laura Putnam

Noted workplace wellness expert Laura Putnam (*Workplace Wellness that Works*) opened her keynote presentation at our 2019 Accountable Blue event, “Infusing Vitality and Wellbeing into Your Organization,” with a calisthenic icebreaker. For the 200 business executives and workplace wellness administrators in the audience, the activity felt like familiar territory. Ten minutes later, however—after Laura shared a series of eye-opening statistics about the limited impact of standalone wellness programming—the opening riff to The Beatles’ “Revolution” caterwauled across the auditorium as Laura called for everyone in the room to “Start a movement! Start a revolution!”, and it became clear that her perspective on workplace wellness might not be so familiar after all.

“It’s my strong belief that we need to move away from the standalone wellness program and instead look for ways to integrate these

wellness concepts into the fabric of organizational culture,” Laura says. “We need to be moving from *Yes, we know wellness is important, but there are other things more important*, to an understanding that well-being connects to every single thing we do inside our organizations.”

It’s a philosophy long shared by our President & CEO Don George, who developed the Accountable Blue workplace wellness program based on the core belief that a “whole person” approach to health and wellness is imperative to every Vermonters’ ability to live at their best. That’s why he was so excited to welcome Laura to share her dynamic perspective at this annual event designed to connect some of Vermont’s most influential business leaders with inspiring ideas and practical strategies for advancing this vision for workplace well-being.

“Cultivating healthy organizations requires strong people strategies, and strong people strategies require engaged leadership,” says Don. “We spend so much time in the places where we work. If we want sustainable wellness, we have to start there.”

Over the course of her lively and inspiring presentation, Laura made a compelling case for employers to think differently about the workplace’s capacity to incorporate more movement, greater balance, and a more palpable sense of humanity into the workplace every day. She stressed that leaders who invest in creating a more vibrant, healthier workplace aren’t making trade-offs in performance or productivity.

“When companies create a culture where people can be their full, authentic selves when they come to work—those companies have a competitive advantage,” she says. “They’re organizationally healthy, and they also consistently outperform their competitors.”

Laura’s energy and insights create space for people to shift their thinking and remove barriers.

“When we give people the room to be well on their own terms, the outcomes speak for themselves,” she says. ■



Laura Putnam makes a point as the America Heart keynote speaker

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