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LOWE’S, WALMART AND OTHER LARGE EMPLOYERS DRIVE VALUE THROUGH NEW SPINE CARE PROGRAM

New Program Aims to Improve Outcomes, Reduce Inappropriate Spine Surgery

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (April 6, 2015) – The Pacific Business Group on Health (PBGH) has expanded its Employers Centers of Excellence Network (ECEN) to include spine surgery, continuing to drive value for participating employers, including Lowe’s and Walmart. This new initiative launches on April 1, 2015 in collaboration with three hospital providers in the U.S.

More than 600,000 Americans undergo spine surgery each year, according to the American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons. This number continues to grow each year despite mounting clinical evidence that many spine surgeries are not only inappropriate but ultimately cause patient harm.

“We vigorously evaluated the participating hospitals’ experience in evidence-based medicine and use of consistently applied patient appropriateness criteria to ensure that participating employees are receiving higher quality care,” said David Lansky, president and CEO of the Pacific Business Group on Health. The three hospital providers participating in the new spine care program include Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, PA, Mercy Hospital, Springfield, MO and Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle, Wash.

This expansion builds off of the successful first full year of the program providing hip and knee replacements. More than 500 patients received a hip or knee replacement through an ECEN center of excellence in 2014 –at no cost to them, including all travel and related expenses. The ECEN also compliments other existing center of excellence programs that Lowe’s and Walmart will continue to offer.

The ECEN utilizes “bundled” rates for joint replacement and spine care, meaning that all cost are included as a single lump sum, which offers cost predictability and transparency. Bundled payments also bring value through enhanced care coordination and improved patient experience. The bundled pricing structure allows employers to offer the program at no cost to the patient, while still controlling their overall healthcare spend. The ECEN is voluntary and patients can still choose to receive care from local providers and incur routine costs.



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PBGH is a non-profit business coalition focused on improving the quality and affordability of health care. The group represents 60 large health care purchaser members with more than 3 million employees, retirees and dependents in California.

Please see attached *ECEN Key Facts and Figures* and *Spine Program Overview* for additional details.

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About Pacific Business Group Health

PBGH is a non-profit business coalition focused on improving the quality and affordability of health care. The group represents 60 large health care purchaser members with more than 10 million employees, retirees and dependents in California. www.pbgh.org Follow us on twitter at https://twitter.com/PBGH_updates