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National Program Launched to Measure and Improve Physician Care: Local Efforts Will Bring Together Doctor “Report Cards”

California Cooperative Initiative Among Handful Nationally Chosen as Pilots to Assess Physician Performance

San Francisco, Calif. (March 1, 2006) – The California Cooperative Healthcare Reporting Initiative, which includes physician organizations, health plans and health care purchasers, was selected as one of six organizations across the country to pilot the collection and reporting of physician-level performance information. The Ambulatory Care Quality Care Alliance (AQA), along with CMS (the national Medicare agency) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality have announced the six partners to lead a national effort aimed at demonstrating methods to compile and communicate information on doctors’ performance.

“The California Cooperative’s selection reflects unprecedented collaboration among California plans, medical groups, and purchasers to assess the care provided by physicians,” said Peter Lee, CEO of the Pacific Business Group on Health. “Health plans and purchasers are working closely with doctors to validate methods of measuring care quality and efficiency, so that doctors can trust information collected and use it to make care improvements.”

Numerous and inconsistent rating systems have historically burdened doctors and confused consumers. In response, the AQA pilots in California, Arizona, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana and Massachusetts will be the first to combine public and private data as they collectively determine the most effective ways to improve data collection and public reporting associated with doctor “report cards.” These regional programs will begin collecting information on doctors’ performance in May.

“Doctors want to know how they are doing and where they can make improvements. This national effort will bring about the most meaningful ways to measure doctors’ performance and report results that ultimately bring about change,” said Ron Bangasser, MD, Past-President of the California Medical Association.

Pacific Business Group on Health, long-time administrator of the California Collaborative, has worked to advance the ability to measure physician performance using CMS, health plan, and employer data. The AQA project builds on prior efforts by aggregating physician performance data across multiple public and private sources and making the resulting performance measures transparent to physicians, consumers, and other stakeholders in the health care system.

Gifford Boyce-Smith, MD, California Medical Director of the health plan partner from previous PBGH physician measurement work, praised the selection of California as one of the pilot’s locations, saying “Blue Shield of California is committed to providing doctors and consumers meaningful information that strengthens decision making and improves our health care system. Working in collaboration and pooling data will enable us to assess the performance of more physicians and on a broader scope to more comprehensively assess what they do in every day practice.”

About the California Cooperative Healthcare Reporting Initiative

The California Cooperative Healthcare Reporting Initiative (CCHRI) is a collaborative of health care purchasers, plans and providers. The Pacific Business Group on Health initially convened CCHRI and now manages it. Members of the collaborative work together to collect and report standardized health plan and provider performance data, promote quality measures, create efficiency in data collection and provide a source for expert advice to consumer reporting entities.

About the Ambulatory Care Quality Alliance

AQA is a broad based national coalition of more than 125 organizations that seeks to improve health care quality through a process in which key stakeholders agree on a strategy for measuring, reporting, and improving performance at the physician level. These 125 organizations represent physicians, consumers, employers, government, health insurance plans, and accrediting and quality organizations.

About Pacific Business Group on Health

Pacific Business Group on Health (PBGH) is one of the nation's top business coalitions focused on health care. The coalition's members spend billions of dollars annually to provide health care coverage to more than 3 million employees, retirees and dependents. In addition, PBGH operates PacAdvantage, a small group purchasing pool providing health coverage to the employees of over 10,000 of California's small businesses.

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