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**11 LOCAL PHYSICIAN PRACTICES TO LAUNCH
PATIENT-CENTERED MEDICAL HOME PILOT**
Health Plans Will Reward Practices for Coordinated,
Comprehensive Primary Care

A national model that puts responsibility for coordinating a patient's care back into the hands of a primary care physician will launch in fall 2009 in Greater Cincinnati with eleven practices that will be reimbursed differently than their peers. The Patient-Centered Medical Home pilot will focus on disease prevention and maintenance of good health, with the primary care physician coordinating care with specialists in an integrated approach tailored to a patient's specific needs. Together, these eleven practices and their 35 physicians serve approximately 100,000 patients. Practices will be paid an additional care management fee for approximately one-third of those patients.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Humana Inc. and UnitedHealthcare of Ohio are supporting the pilot, agreeing to pay practices a fee for case management in addition to the usual fees these physicians receive. Patients will have access to a medical home team that knows their histories and will help them not only navigate the complex health care system but work proactively to keep them healthier.

"We are pleased to have the support of all three major health plans in the market to launch this pilot," said Greg Ebel, executive director of the Health Improvement Collaborative. "The leadership all have shown in working together in this targeted area to benefit patients across our community is to be commended. "

"Medical care in the U.S. has become fragmented and not responsive to patients' needs for coordinated, comprehensive care," says Robert Graham, MD, Professor of Family Medicine at University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. Dr. Graham chairs the Patient-Centered Medical Home Work Group, a part of the Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati's Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q) program. AF4Q is a groundbreaking effort to improve overall quality of care in the Tristate. The Collaborative is partnering with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation on the effort.

The eleven practices were selected from among 25 applicants through a competitive process based upon:

- Their readiness to successfully complete the transformation process
- A balance of geographic and specialty distribution
- A spectrum of practice sizes
- Rural and urban representation
- A balance between individual practices and those affiliated with health systems

- more -

Patient-Centered Medical Home
Add 1

The practices are:

Alliance Primary Care - West Chester
The Christ Hospital Medical Associates
Fairfield Medical Group, Inc.
Family Medical Group - Glenway Avenue
Group Health Associates - Springdale
Queen City Physicians - Hyde Park
Queen City Medical Group - Anderson

Summit Medical Group - Williamstown KY
UC Physicians Internal Medicine -
Montgomery
UC Physicians Family Medicine - University
Pointe
Zile Family Health Care -Hillsboro

The effectiveness of the model will be carefully evaluated. Meredith Rosenthal, PhD, Harvard School of Public Health, will assess practice data generated during the pilot. Her work will be supported by the Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation working to improve health care quality and efficiency.

“This pilot is one of a very small number across the country aiming to focus practice reimbursement on prevention and maintenance of health rather than respond to acute illness,” said Craig Brammer, Senior Research Associate at the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati AF4Q director. “With the strong national focus on health reform, it’s important to note that innovative, locally driven efforts are often the basis for the kind of health care transformation that ultimately needs to happen,” Brammer said.

Brammer said that while a number of medical home pilots are beginning to surface across the country, few involve multiple insurance companies working collectively to test rational changes to the payment system. “Aligning Forces for Quality is doing what it was designed to do, which is to bring all stakeholders to the table to design systems that work best for patients, the employers who are paying for health care, and the broader community,” he said.

“As a representative of area employers, I’m gratified to see the way health care providers are responding to the Patient-Centered Medical Home model,” said Sharron DiMario, president of the Employer Health Care Alliance. “Many practices will benefit from the shared learnings of this work, including other forward-thinking practices not selected for the pilot. Doctors will quickly see the benefit to themselves and their patients, and employers should see lower costs and healthier employees.”

The medical home is a new model of care founded on the idea that each patient should have a personal (“primary care”) doctor, and that by paying primary care doctors for the services patients value most, they will have more time and attention to give to their patients, helping to avoid unnecessary and expensive tests, hospitalizations, and emergency visits, and ultimately saving money for insurers, employers, and patients.

“As the nation looks to improve its primary care infrastructure, Greater Cincinnati is increasingly viewed as a leader in bringing multiple health care stakeholders together to test innovative ideas,” said Ebel. “These ideas offer us an excellent chance of making real differences in people’s lives.”

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