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**Primary Care Physician Practices Receive National Recognition as
Patient-Centered Medical Homes**

Innovative Care Delivery Holds Promise for Better Health Outcomes; Lower Costs

Eleven Greater Cincinnati physician practices have been recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as Patient Centered Medical Homes. These practices are among the first in Ohio and Kentucky to receive this designation.

The practices achieved the NCQA recognition as part of a patient-centered medical home pilot program developed by the Health Improvement Collaborative. Over the past two years, physicians and staff members have received support and training to transform their practices. The pilot is one of only a handful in the nation to have the financial backing of multiple health insurance plans. The participating plans in the Cincinnati are Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, United Healthcare and Humana, each of which is providing additional “care management” funds to the pilots. Interest in the program was so great that several other primary care groups have also been participating in the training as “co-pilots”. The co-pilot group is receiving the training without additional reimbursement and will be seeking NCQA recognition later this year. From the pilot group, 7 of the 11 practices achieved level 3 recognition, the highest level achievable. (Participating groups are listed on the enclosed sheet titled.)

The patient-centered medical home is a model of care that holds significant promise for better health care quality, improved involvement of patients in their own care and reduced avoidable costs over time. The model puts responsibility for coordinating care in the hands of a primary care physician (family physician, general internist or general pediatrician) who has an ongoing relationship with each patient. If necessary, this physician makes arrangements for care by specialists and communicates with them so that patients receive integrated care that is tailored to their needs. With a focus on disease prevention and maintenance of good health, the PCMH model has a proven track record for improving patient outcomes while reducing overall health care costs.

The medical home model may provide participating primary care physicians additional reimbursement for coordinating the care of their patients with hospitals, specialists and pharmacists. Ideally, this additional reimbursement allows physicians and staff (the patient’s medical home team) to invest in

better support for the patients who will benefit from active participation in their health and wellness throughout their lifetime.

“It’s exciting to see this innovative model implemented in our region. As the nation looks to improve its primary care infrastructure,” said Dr. Robert Graham, program director for Cincinnati Aligning Force for Quality and professor of family medicine at the University of Cincinnati College Of Medicine who led the PCMH pilot program. “Greater Cincinnati is viewed as a leader in bringing multiple stakeholders together to test these ideas that offer us an excellent chance of making a real difference in the lives of real people.”

In addition to the Health Collaborative and the local health plans, the Employers Health Coalition of Ohio has been a key supporter of the pilot program through the involvement and assistance of Sharron DiMario, Director of Community Initiatives.

For more information about the NCAQ recognition of patient-centered medical homes, visit www.ncqa.org.

About the Health Improvement Collaborative

The Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati is dedicated to bringing people together to effectively address regional health care issues. The Collaborative assembles diverse community stakeholders ... hospitals, physicians, insurers, patients, business, education, government and community members... with the goal of generating measurable, sustainable health improvement. By collaborating on tough health issues, meaningful progress is possible for the well-being of people throughout the 14 counties of Greater Cincinnati. Key initiatives include Cincinnati Aligning Forces for Quality, a partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that focuses on lifting the quality of care in our region; and Cincinnati MD Resource Center, a program to recruit and retain an adequate physician supply for the region. The work of the Collaborative has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.