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## **DFW AREA PHYSICIANS RECOGNIZED FOR IMPROVING QUALITY OF CARE FOR TREATMENT OF HEART DISEASE, DIABETES AND STROKE**

### ***American Airlines, UnitedHealthcare, DFWBGH and Physicians Collaborate on First Quality Improvement Initiative for Outpatients***

**DALLAS – February 6, 2007** – American Airlines, the Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health and UnitedHealthcare honored area physicians today for successfully completing the first phase of a health care improvement project to enhance the quality of medical care in the outpatient setting. The physicians participated in the AIM for Excellence program to develop stronger care management between patients and doctors and to improve the quality of care based on evidenced-based treatment guidelines (the use of proven methods of care). Launched in June 2005 by the Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health (DFWBGH), this first phase measured physician performance in the treatment of three of the most common and deadly chronic diseases in the nation – heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

Nearly 100 primary care physicians in North Texas who treat a large number of American Airlines employees and their family members participated in AIM-1. These physicians were provided practice tools and support, including information on the latest treatment guidelines for chronic illness from nationally-recognized organizations such as the American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, and the American College of Cardiology. The AIM physicians' performance in treating these patients was measured and reported back to them at six-month intervals.

AIM for Excellence awards were presented to nine AIM doctors who demonstrated "superior performance" in the treatment of these chronic illnesses. These physicians scored a perfect 100 percent compliance with recommended treatment guidelines for heart disease, diabetes and stroke during the 12-month measurement period. Additionally, 54 other physicians were recognized for exceeding the goals of the AIM project, which were set at 85 percent or better compliance for each illness. The names of the nine award-winners will be posted on the DFWBGH website at [www.dfwbgh.org](http://www.dfwbgh.org) to further recognize these physicians for their outstanding patient care.

Many employers, including American Airlines, have active health promotion and disease management programs to help employees improve their health and reduce their risk for chronic diseases. However, for these workplace programs to be more effective, employees' physicians need to be more proactive in the care management process. "This was the impetus for the business group to launch this initiative with key health care stakeholders: employers, health plans and physicians," said Marianne Fazen, DFWBGH executive director.

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## PHYSICIANS RECOGNIZED FOR IMPROVING QUALITY OF CARE 2-2-2

This collaboration is unique and provides information to physicians to enable them to be more effective health care providers. The data assists doctors in more quickly adopting evidence-based guidelines and reaching their goals of providing better care for patients.

American Airlines participated in this program to complement the company's current efforts to improve employees' health and well-being. American Airlines' approximately 55,000 DFW-based employees and their family members provided a large patient population treated by north Texas-area physicians. UnitedHealthcare provided blinded insurance claims data to indicate how AIM physicians followed clinical treatment guidelines. Performance ratings were also compared with ratings for all primary care physicians in UnitedHealthcare's north Texas provider network, as well as with national Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS) ratings.

"Initial results indicate that AIM physicians performed better in aggregate than local, state and national averages," said Paul Solomon, M.D., market medical director, UnitedHealthcare. "We look forward to continuing our efforts to improve the quality of care by facilitating stronger awareness of evidence-based medicine standards."

The second phase of this initiative will be launched in 2007 and will include a patient compliance component in addition to physician performance improvement efforts. This model may eventually be expanded to improve outpatient care in other communities through the National Business Coalition on Health of which DFWBGH is a member. The AIM-1 project is supported by an educational grant from sanofi aventis.

"AIM for Excellence was developed to enhance the current health promotion and disease management programs of our employer members and to encourage collaboration between the local business community, health plans and physicians," said Fazen. "By measuring health care quality, outcomes and care processes, we hope to improve the value of employer-sponsored health care."

### **About Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health**

The Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health is a 120-member coalition of Dallas and Fort Worth area employers committed to market-based health care reform. Activities include: education programs on topics of key interest to employers; quality improvement initiatives providing comparative measures of quality, outcomes and care processes; relationship building initiatives; and legislative updates and analyses. Members include American Airlines, Bell Helicopter-Textron, EDS, JC Penney, Neiman Marcus, RadioShack, Southwest Airlines, Texas Instruments, TXU, Verizon, and others. DFWBGH's goals are to empower employers to make informed health care purchasing decisions and to encourage health care providers to continuously improve their performance. [www.dfwbgh.org](http://www.dfwbgh.org).

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