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Partnership for Peak Healthcare Performance Releases Reports to DFW Physicians on Diabetes Care

Area doctors perform recommended diabetes tests more frequently than 90% of the nation

DALLAS – October 22, 2010 – In keeping with efforts to improve care for patients in North Texas, this week the Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health mailed reports to 1,250 area physicians on their diabetes care quality results. Calculated from commercial claims data aggregated across DFW's five major health plans, the *DFW Diabetes Care Reports* are sent to doctors who treated at least 20 diabetes patients in 2008.

The reports provide physicians personalized results in performing four recommended diabetes tests: hemoglobin A1c (blood test used to determine how well diabetes is being controlled), LDL cholesterol (Low Density Lipoprotein or “bad” cholesterol), and monitoring for kidney disease and eye exams. Reporting performance in diabetes care management is a key activity of the Partnership for Peak Healthcare Performance (PHPP), a collaborative program launched by the DFWBGH in 2007. This is the second year of reporting results to physicians.

Report findings

- DFW physicians generally performed well versus physicians nationwide.
- DFW physicians on average performed two of the recommended tests (testing A1c and LDL levels) at a higher rate than 90 percent of the nation's doctors.
- The observed rate at which DFW physicians performed recommended diabetes related tests was on average significantly higher than the national mean testing rates reported by the National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA).
- In 2008, on average DFW physicians performed key evidence-based tests for diabetes care at a higher rate than in 2007 (improved 2 to 4 percentage points on three of the measures).

“You can’t improve what you don’t measure and this is especially true in the health care system,” said Marianne Fazen, executive director of DFWBGH. “These reports provide a benchmark for measuring improvements in care and a spring board toward more transparency in the DFW market.”

The Diabetes Care Reports create an opportunity for dialog between employers and physicians. Through the PPHP, major local employers and leaders of large physician groups have initiated discussion to become better informed about the issues impacting health care providers and payers and to seek common ground for increasing awareness of diabetes risk, to promote diabetes prevention, and to remove barriers and create incentives for patients to seek and obtain high quality diabetes care when needed.

“Physicians are excited to have more opportunities, like the Diabetes Care Reports, to partner with employers, enhancing our shared goals of improved quality and reduced cost,” said Guy Culpepper, MD, president and CEO, Jefferson Physician Group. “Historically, we have faced the barrier of only being able to interact with the insurance plans. It’s important to remember that employers are really paying the health care bills, and with improved communication we can focus resources on identifying those changes that can produce the most dramatic results. This initiative is paving the way for a new model of physician and employer partnership.”

DFWBGH’s Diabetes Care Reports are the result of a three year collaboration of key stakeholders including local physicians, employers, consumers and health plans who worked together to develop workable care measurement and improvement strategies that are acceptable to all. Doctors were directly involved in selecting the performance metrics used in designing the reports. The initial reports, developed only for the physicians and not being made public at this time, are intended to begin a dialogue with physicians on how to increase public awareness of diabetes risk factors and prevention, and to improve diabetes care and outcomes in the DFW area.

The data are aggregated across the five participating health plans – Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas, CIGNA, Humana and UnitedHealthcare – to provide physicians a more complete picture of the care their patients are receiving.

Combining data across the five health plans provides a larger sample of patients and a broader, more statistically significant view of the care a physician's diabetes patients received. Consistent

measurement criteria and methodology across the five health plans provides meaningful comparisons of individual physician results to community-wide averages. The PPHP participants can compare data between health plans to identify ways to improve the collection and reporting of quality data, as well as evaluate how different health plan designs may affect access to care, care management, and patient compliance.

“These reports will offer benchmarking value for the future performance-based reporting that will result from efforts of the recently launched North Texas Accountable Healthcare Partnership,” said David Toomey, regional president of CIGNA HealthCare. “The North Texas Accountable Healthcare Partnership, a collaboration of health insurers, hospitals, physicians and employers, was established last year to address the high cost of health care and high rate of obesity-related illness in North Texas.”

Why focus on diabetes?

About 400,000 people are diagnosed with diabetes in the DFW Metroplex (approximately 7% of a population of 6 million). According to the American Diabetes Association, about a 25% of those with diabetes don't even know it. This equates to another 133,000 people in the DFW area – or one out of every 50 DFW residents – who have diabetes and do not know it.

About the Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health

The Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health is a 130-member coalition of Dallas and Fort Worth area employers committed to market-based health care reform. Members include American Airlines, Bell Helicopter-Textron, Brinker International, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, JC Penney, Neiman Marcus, Sabre Holdings, Southwest Airlines, Texas Instruments, and others. A member of the Texas Business Group on Health and the National Business Coalition on Health, 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. For additional information visit: www.dfwbgh.org.

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