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Bridges to Excellence Launches Medical Home Program Doctors can qualify for up to \$100,000 in bonuses

WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Today Bridges to Excellence (BTE), the nation's largest effort to reward physicians for delivery of high quality care, announced its support of the medical home approach to providing health care by launching the BTE Medical Home Program. The initiative will reward physicians that demonstrate they have adopted really good systems and processes of care, and are using those systems to deliver positive results in the management of their patients -- in particular patients with chronic conditions.

BTE's Medical Home recognition is a natural extension of its current programs and will be automatically triggered when doctors achieve a certain level of performance in BTE's Physician Office Link Program and at least two of BTE's condition-specific programs, such as the Diabetes Care Link, Cardiac Care Link and Spine Care Link.

Medical home

A medical home provides patients with access to quality health care from doctors who practice evidence-based guidelines; use appropriate health information technology; and demonstrate the use of "best practices" while being accountable for the quality and value of care.

The medical home approach was initially developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and has been fully endorsed by the American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians and the American Osteopathic Association. Members of the Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative, a coalition of major employers, consumer groups, and other stakeholders including BTE, have joined with organizations representing physicians to develop and advance the patient-centered medical home.

"The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) believes everyone should have a personal medical home -- a family physician who serves as the focal point through which they receive acute, chronic and preventive medical services," said Jim King, MD, president of the AAFP.

BTE's efforts to support the medical home can significantly boost the growing momentum of this patient-centered model of care. The AAFP has long worked to foster ongoing relationships

between family physicians and their patients by empowering its members to provide accessible, accountable, comprehensive, integrated, patient-centered, scientifically valid care to all patients."

David C. Dale, MD, FACP, president of the American College of Physicians (ACP) noted, "The ACP, with our physician colleagues, believes the patient-centered medical home (PCMH) can serve as a framework for improving the U.S. health care delivery system. Practices electing to become a PCMH commit to providing care that recognizes the true value of partnership between patients and their personal physicians -- who in turn accept the accountability and responsibility of improving the quality of care. The Bridges to Excellence Medical Home program is designed to support this transformation of health care and ACP welcomes the opportunity to work with BTE as the program evolves."

Rewards and cost savings

Through participation in the BTE Medical Home recognition, doctors can receive an annual bonus payment of \$125 for each patient covered by a participating employer, with a suggested maximum yearly incentive of \$100,000.

"Our research shows that patients who are well taken care of cost less," said Francois de Brantes, BTE CEO. "The average potential savings per covered life would be approximately \$250 a year."

How physicians can participate

Recognized physicians will be awarded a BTE Medical Home distinction in addition to the other Program recognitions because they have demonstrated that they have adopted and are effectively using advanced systems of care to produce good results for their patients.

Physicians who achieve a Level 2 or Level 3 in BTE's Physician Office Link (POL) Program as well as a Level 2 in two other BTE programs -- Diabetes Care Link, Cardiac Care Link or Spine Care Link -- will achieve BTE Medical Home recognition.

"For patients, a medical home can potentially be the difference between a series of episodic office visits and an ongoing two-way relationship with their physician," said National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) President Margaret E. O'Kane. "Patients whose doctors practice at a medical home typically experience better-coordinated care and are more engaged in their health. That's what we all want from our health care system."

Bridges to Excellence's POL was developed in collaboration with NCQA, a leading health care quality organization, in 2003 as a means to reward physicians that adopt good processes and systems of care, including adoption of electronic medical records. Today there are a number of ways for physicians to be recognized under BTE's POL program: complete NCQA's new version of its Physician Practice Connections program for patient-centered medical homes, complete the NCQA's standard version of the Physician Practice Connections, or complete the BTE Office

Systems Survey co-developed with the Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) and is administered by QIOs such as MassPRO and IPRO.

"Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies are working to transform the traditional primary care doctor's office into a central point for Americans to organize and coordinate their health care and develop patient-centered medical home demonstration sites throughout the U.S.," said Allan Korn, MD, senior vice president and chief medical officer of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. "Initiatives such as the BTE Medical Home recognition may assist us in accomplishing our goals to impact patient health and costs and are an important step toward reengineering medical practices."

About Bridges to Excellence

Bridges to Excellence (BTE) is a non-profit coalition-based organization created to encourage significant leaps in the quality of care by recognizing and rewarding health care providers who demonstrate that they deliver safe, timely, effective, and patient-centered care. BTE works with large employers, health plans, providers and a wide range of organizations that have a shared goal of improving quality and patient outcomes. For more information, visit <http://www.bridgestoexcellence.org>.

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