



Michigan Association of Health Plans

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Wellness innovations, early detection practices among 2011 MAHP Pinnacle Award winners

Eleventh year of competition recognizing state's best health care improvement practices

The Michigan Association of Health Plans has recognized 15 programs developed by 10 MAHP members from around the state as "Pinnacle Award" winners for their outstanding contributions to increasing efficiency and patient care, helping lower costs and increase service to Michigan residents.

The innovative practices, which will be shared among MAHP members, address issues including childhood obesity, minority health care issues, high blood pressure and other important health matters – several of which were cited by Gov. Rick Snyder during his recent health care address.

“Since 2001, Michigan Association of Health Plan members have shared their best ideas with each other to help improve Michigan’s wellness, increase efficiency of medical care delivery and lower overall costs of health care in the state,” said Rick Murdock, executive director of MAHP. “Gov. Snyder recently challenged Michigan to improve its health – MAHP members are leading the way in answering that challenge.”

The awards were presented at a reception on Tuesday, Sept. 20 at the Lansing Center. Priority Health was recognized as a winner in four categories, and also received an honorable mention; Health Plan of Michigan won in two categories. Other winners were McLaren Health Plan, HealthPlus of Michigan, UnitedHealthcare Great Lakes Health Plan, CareSource Michigan, Midwest Health Plan, OminCare Health Plan, Venture Behavior Health and ValueOptions.

Health plans submit important new programs to a judging panel comprised of health care experts, lawmakers and news media. The panel reviewed 39 submissions before selecting winners in eight major categories, several with separate divisions for commercial health insurers and Medicaid health plans. Full details on each winner are available at www.mahp.org.

Below is a brief description of winning programs.

Business/Operational Performance – Commercial: McLaren Health Plan for “MedCheck”:

The MedCheck program, championed by McLaren Pharmacy Management Administrator, helps employers and individual members better use pharmacy benefits to focus on quality, safety and cost. MedCheck ensures employees have the knowledge to maximize their pharmacy benefit by utilizing cost saving programs developed by McLaren Health Plan, while improving health outcomes.

Business/Operational Performance – Medicaid: Health Plan of Michigan for “Preventive Health Alerts – Patient Reminders at Each and Every Contact”: The United States spends billions of dollars on healthcare services that could have been avoided if preventive healthcare would have been utilized. To encourage preventive health services, Health Plan of Michigan set up standardized alerts for staff, members, and providers aimed at ensuring members are aware of and attend preventive care screening. Using innovative information technology to maximize productivity and contact with members and providers, Health Plan of Michigan is seeing measurable increases on preventive service completion, helping hold down costs.

Clinical Service Improvement – Commercial: HealthPlus of Michigan for “Focus on Hypertension”: Recognizing the substantial deadly and costly effects of hypertension when it is left untreated or treated sub-optimally, HealthPlus used electronic medical records to identify members with elevated blood pressure, assess patient compliance with treatment, and inform physicians of non-compliance and/or patient blood pressures that remain high.

Outcomes evaluation has revealed 27 percent of members achieved a blood pressure at target goal within three months of the intervention.

Clinical Service Improvement – Medicaid: UnitedHealthcare Great Lakes Health Plan for “Improving Breast Cancer Screening Rates for African American and Arab American Women.” UnitedHealthcare Great Lakes Health Plan identified that African American and Arab American members living in Wayne County were less likely to get breast cancer screenings compared to Caucasian members who reside in Wayne County. The company identified four primary care physician offices with large numbers of female African American or Arab American members and assigned outreach specialists to work one-on-one with primary care physician offices and members to educate members on the importance of cancer screenings and how the screening is done, to address misperceptions and fears and to make personal follow-up reminders.

Breast cancer screening rates of the involved offices improved 20 percentage points.

Chronic Disease Management – Commercial: Priority Health for “More Treatment from Home – Telemonitoring for Heart Failure Members”: Aiming at reducing re-hospitalization of members who had suffered heart failure, Priority Health implemented a telemonitoring program allowing members’ clinical data to be monitored while they are at home by a registered nurse. Changes prompt a call to the patient; education/assessment is provided as needed. Physicians are notified of a significant change in the member’s clinical status.

Total costs were reduced 34.7 percent, inpatient costs decreased 39.4 percent, inpatient days decreased 37 percent, and inpatient stays decreased 35.8 percent. Priority is now developing pilot programs to use similar technology on other high-risk populations.

Chronic Disease Management – Medicaid: CareSource Michigan for “Caresource Asthma Program”: The CareSource Asthma program utilized an industry-leading team of case managers to identify and assist eligible asthma patients, those 5-50 years old identified as having persistent asthma and appropriately prescribed medication to control the disease. CareSource monitored self-management practices of the population and when necessary supplied ordering

providers detailed “asthma prescription fill histories,” to increase the total filled inhaled controller prescriptions. The goal of the intervention was to reduce member reliance on short acting (rescue) asthma medications and improve member’s health and ability to self-manage asthma.

Care Management for Medicare Populations – Special Needs: Midwest Health Plan for “Seeing is Believing: Screening for Glaucoma”: Midwest’s Special Needs Members typically are elderly persons with multiple chronic medical and behavioral conditions often at risk for developing glaucoma. While glaucoma is the leading cause of vision loss, early treatment brings good results. Midwest has developed a comprehensive program to increase screenings, using targeted reminder letters, intervention through nurse case managers, easy to read and understand newsletter articles on glaucoma, information at health fairs and reminders to providers about glaucoma screenings. Screening rates have increased from 27.3 percent in 2008 to 65.1 percent in 2011.

Health Care Technology – Medicaid: Health Plan of Michigan for “Care Coordination for Foster Care Children”: In 2010, the State of Michigan began the transition of foster care children into Medicaid Health Plans. At that time, Health Plan of Michigan initiated a comprehensive Foster Care Children initiative to ensure smooth enrollment transition. The company updated to its Managed Care System and related business processes. A red Foster Care button was activated for all foster care children with features to alert staff and display contact information to ensure appropriate communication. The plan coordinates care with a foster child’s parent or guardian, foster care parents, case worker and health care provider. Use of technology has resulted in a smooth enrollment transition and helped to coordinate care and promote medical assessments and preventive care for foster care children.

Health Care Technology – Commercial: Priority Health for “Going National: Find a Doctor Online Tool Upgrades”: Priority Health enhanced its Find a Doctor online directory to make it easier for members to access health care no matter where they live, work or travel. In 2010, the addition of Priority Health’s national network to the on-line tool allowed members to search for physicians and hospitals wherever they are. Members can now learn the HealthGrades patient satisfaction ratings available for all hospitals and out-of-Michigan doctors. Enhancements include the addition of more sophisticated filters, a mobile interface and a graphic to help identify specialists based on the affected body part. Since the upgrades, the tool has been used more than 200,000 times and providers have been searched in every state with the exception of Rhode Island.

Community Outreach – Single Plan: OmniCare Health Plan for “Doc Bear Shuffle”: To fight the growing issue of obesity in children and adults in Michigan, OmniCare developed a “Doc Bear Shuffle” song and dance routine. It’s a fun way to emphasize the importance of physical activity at all ages.

Since its release, schools and community centers have included the Doc Bear in their curriculums and programs. More than 700 DVD’s have been distributed and the Doc Bear Shuffle has been performed to over 60,000 individuals. Physical activity is key to reducing obesity and the Doc Bear Shuffle is a fun way to convey this very important message.

Collaborative Community Health Initiatives: Priority Health Medicaid for “Fit Kids 360”:

Priority Health partnered with First Steps Kent, Cherry Street Health Services, Forest Hills Pediatrics and DeVos Pediatrics to develop FitKids 360, a comprehensive stage II obesity intervention for children, and a true community collaborative that aims to serve children and families in need. The program gives overweight children and their parents the support they need to make real, lasting behavior change while focusing on learning new information, helping kids and parents acquire healthier habits and improving the health of the home environment.

Fit Kids 360 takes an effective, evidence-based approach to addressing childhood obesity. The two-hour sessions are held once a week for seven weeks and include physical activity, nutrition and behavioral health. The program is evaluated and outcomes tracked on all participants through a common database.

Limited Service Member – Process Improvement: Venture Behavioral Health for “Establishing a Primary Care Clinic Inside a Community Mental Health Center”:

Persons with serious mental illness die on average 25 years earlier than the general population. In 2007 Venture Behavioral Health, a southwest Michigan Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan, and Summit Pointe, a community mental health center in Battle Creek, established a Primary Care Practice housed within Summit Pointe – the only Center in Michigan to do so. Peer Support Specialists operate as navigators and trainers of patients for both medical and behavioral health conditions. This has enhanced patient engagement and assured better chronic care management. Patients have expressed greater satisfaction with care and displayed better treatment compliance. Early findings suggest improved health status for patients using the service.

Limited Service Member – Clinical Quality Improvement: ValueOptions for “Depression Care Management Program”:

Depression affects almost 10 percent of Michigan residents. In 2008, the ValueOptions Great Lakes Service Center made a serious commitment to those members suffering from this disorder and designed a performance improvement project aimed at symptomatic relief from this illness and developed the Depression Care Management Program. This project immediately identifies those members admitted to an inpatient facility with a diagnosis of Major Depression or Bipolar disorder, and invites their participation in the program. Through intensive care management, ongoing depression screening at set intervals, medication compliance, and aftercare mental health follow through, participating members have seen their depression scores decrease, their average time in the community increase, and a reduction in readmissions.

Cancer Genomics: Priority Health for “Genetics: Counseling, Testing and Screening”:

Priority Health developed a comprehensive medical policy and prior authorization process for genetic counseling, testing and screening which includes counseling and testing that aligns with US Preventive Services Task Force recommendations regarding those carrying the BRAC gene, which increases chances of breast cancer. Priority Health offers coverage of in-person consultations as well as telephone and web-based services as part of its extensive network of genetic services for counseling and education for both members and providers across our entire network.

Priority Health developed policies offering access to the recommended follow-up testing and services for their members identified as being at increased risk by having a known BRCA mutation. Since the implementation of our comprehensive program we have seen a substantial increase in access to these services with an overall decrease in associated costs.

The Michigan Association of Health Plans (MAHP) is an industry voice for Michigan's health care plans. MAHP facilitates communication among members, government, and the industry regarding health care issues of common concern. The mission of the Michigan Association of Health Plans is to provide leadership for the promotion and advocacy of high quality, affordable, accessible health care for the citizens of Michigan.