



National Health Council

1730 M Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036-4561 • 202-785-3910 • www.nationalhealthcouncil.org • info@nhcouncil.org

February 5, 2009

Contact:

Nancy Hughes
202-973-0550
nhughes@nhcouncil.org

Cross-cutting Coalition Committed to Lowering Patient Costs

(Washington, DC) – A coalition of patients, pharmacists, providers, employers, and health plans today announced the creation of the Better Health Care by Design initiative to formulate solutions to help people living with complex chronic diseases who face an increasing problem of out-of-pocket costs.

“There is growing evidence – both empirical and anecdotally – that out-of-pocket costs are becoming a more prevalent barrier to health care for people who have insurance,” said [Marc Boutin](#), executive vice president and COO of the National Health Council.

He explained the intent of Better Health Care by Design is to bring together collective expertise to craft innovative and pragmatic benefit design models that provide better value for both employer-based insurance plans and government-run programs.

Approximately [125 million people in the United States](#) have one or more chronic conditions, and approximately [75 percent of the health care dollars](#) spent in this country go toward treating chronic conditions. A poll showed [62 percent of voters](#) say the economic crisis makes it more important than ever to take on health care reform.

“If we simply expand coverage without addressing the out-of-pocket issue, people with chronic conditions will continue to face overwhelming challenges in managing their care,” said Boutin. “Take for example people like BJ. At age 60, she was diagnosed with cancer. When her husband switched health plans, her coverage was dropped for a month. It cost her more than \$3,000 for the medicine that was saving her life.”

Last September, the National Health Council, Wyeth, and a group of business leaders, insurance providers, and health professionals met in Philadelphia to discuss the growing problem of out of pocket costs. Since that meeting, many of the attendees participated in working groups to address public policy issues and assess innovative approaches to health care benefits that are helpful to people with chronic diseases.

(more)

According to a statement from Better Health Care by Design, there are proven models already being utilized by the business community. A growing number of companies are providing services, such as free check-ups, screening exams, and modified drug formularies. These programs save the employees money, increase worker productivity, and reduce overall health care spending.

“There is a collective will among all to work together to get the job done,” said Boutin. “The National Health Council has long understood the importance of working together with diverse stakeholders, and we provide a united voice for patients as a core member of Better Health Care by Design.”

The National Health Council (NHC) is the only organization of its kind that brings together all segments of the health care community to provide a united voice for the more than 100 million people with chronic diseases and disabilities and their family caregivers. Made up of approximately 115 national health-related organizations, its core membership includes 50 of the nation’s leading patient advocacy groups. Other members include professional and membership associations, nonprofit organizations with an interest in health, and major pharmaceutical, medical device, and biotechnology companies. To learn more about NHC and its Campaign to Put Patients First, visit www.nhcouncil.org.

###