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College for the Advanced Management of Health Benefits

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College for the Advanced Management of Health Benefits

The Department of Health Policy is pleased to announce the formation of a new national training program, The College for the Advanced Management of Health Benefits. The Benefits College is a collaboration among Thomas Jefferson University, the HealthCare 21 Business Coalition in Knoxville, TN, and the National Business Coalition on Health, based in Washington, DC. The College's first regional training program was held November 9-12 in Nashville.

The College for Advanced Management of Health Benefits was created to help employee benefit managers successfully address the growing challenges of providing high quality health benefits and managing rising benefit costs. The College offers a practical, intensive program that focuses on benefits purchasing techniques and skills, emphasizing how to improve the value, quality-cost ratio, and effectiveness of healthcare services purchased on behalf of employees. The program is targeted specifically toward benefit managers, human resources professionals, chief financial officers, and other direct purchasers of health benefits.

The Department of Health Policy's interest in co-directing this program results from an ongoing research initiative supported by The Commonwealth Fund, examining the employer's role in fostering quality health care through a set of activities collectively labeled "value-based purchasing" (VBP). The Department's research has described the growth of the VBP movement and the potential impact of VBP on quality and safety in care. More recently, through a series of case studies with 18 employers and coalitions identified as leaders in the VBP arena, the Department's researchers have identified a set of strategies which employers can implement in order to overcome the many challenges to developing or fostering their own VBP initiatives. This work is of national importance, given growing concerns about the financial burden providing health benefits places on insurers and the fragility of the employer-based health insurance system.

The College for Advanced Management of Health Benefits has been developed to disseminate VBP strategies and address related educational needs of employee benefits managers. The week-long training program consists of 10 instructional modules, as well as case-based learning, skill-building exercises, and assistance for participants in developing "customized action plans" (CAPs), which they can begin to implement in their organizations upon completion of the course. A relatively small class size of 50 participants per training program ensures time for discussion and interaction. Jerry Burgess, CEO of HealthCare 21, who serves as the College's Program Director, will, with support from other faculty, follow up with participants periodically to monitor their progress in implementing CAPs and determine the need for further education and assistance.

Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems is supporting the national program's operations and curriculum development, and AstraZeneca sponsored the Southeast Regional Program, held in Nashville. Sponsors are being sought for future regional programs, with the goal of offering the College program three times per year in different regions of the country.

Neil I. Goldfarb, et al.: College for the Advanced Management of Health Benefits

For a brochure describing the College curriculum, or additional information, please contact us at neil.goldfarb@jefferson.edu or 215-955-6969.

About the Authors

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