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Welcome to Value-Based Purchasing

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From the Editor

Welcome to Value-Based Purchasing

We are pleased to launch Value-Based Purchasing, a new quarterly electronic journal focused on sharing information and useful strategies for value-based purchasing (VBP). We define VBP broadly as “a range of activities in which public and private purchasers engage to influence the behavior of consumers, health plans, and health care providers, so as to achieve greater value in health care.”

This e-journal continues the mission of the College for Advanced Management of Health Benefits, established in 2004 as an innovative educational program designed to promote employer engagement in value-based purchasing of employee health benefits. The College is predicated on the concept that employers can and should emphasize value of benefits (the quality/cost ratio) in their purchasing decisions, rather than focusing solely on cost, thereby increasing provider and insurer accountability for delivering high-quality care. The curriculum also promotes strategies for educating consumers and giving them appropriate incentives to further drive measurable improvements in quality and value of health care. Through a four-day education program, and follow-up support services, the College seeks to create a national cadre of employers engaged in value-based purchasing strategies.

The College is a partnership between three organizations committed to improving quality and cost-effectiveness of health care:

- **HealthCare 21 Business Coalition (HC21):** A business-led coalition of employers, health plans, hospitals, and physicians collaborating to improve the quality and affordability of health care services in the East and Central Tennessee regions.
- **National Business Coalition on Health (NBCH):** The national association of nearly 90 employer-led coalitions across the United States, representing over 7,000 employers and 34 million employees and their dependents.
- **Thomas Jefferson University Department of Health Policy (TJU):** A nationally recognized academic research, education, and consulting group, specializing in health services research and customized training programs.

The College provides a practical, intensive program of education and training for managers responsible for purchasing health care benefits in their organizations. The curriculum has been developed with the educational needs of mid-size employers in mind, since this group has virtually no other source for receiving this type of specialized training and assistance.

The College was established in the spring of 2004, with national program sponsorship provided by Johnson & Johnson Healthcare Systems. The first four-day regional training program, sponsored by AstraZeneca, was held in November 2004 in Nashville, Tennessee. In 2005, programs have been held in Phoenix (sponsored by Johnson & Johnson), Chicago (sponsored by AstraZeneca), and Minneapolis (sponsored by Genentech). By the end of the first full year of operation, the College had trained over 100 employers and employer coalition leaders. Three regional programs have been planned for 2006 (see program schedule).

As we have developed and offered our programs over the past two years we have recognized that there is a void in the availability of timely and useful information for purchasers, to help them improve the value they derive from their benefits expenditures. Through this electronic journal, we hope to help fill this void. In each issue, we will feature at least two articles from value-based purchasing practitioners, researchers, and policy makers, providing useful information on how to improve value in making purchasing decisions. We also will provide viewpoint articles (editorials), news briefs, a review of recent published literature on VBP, and announcements regarding the College for Advanced Management of Health Benefits.

We welcome your feedback on this inaugural issue and look forward to your continued readership. We also hope that you will consider contributing articles and information for publication in future issues. Please contact us at any time with your ideas.

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