



News Notes

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Quarterly News & Updates

While the situation with the coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in flux, nothing is more important to the Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare than the health and safety of our members, your employees, your families, our community, and our Country. The Coalition's operations and purchasing programs remain committed to providing full services to members.

Whether we are moving into the "new normal" or getting "back to business" our plan is to continue supporting our members, with purchasing programs that increase membership value and an ongoing commitment to providing education and networking opportunities - whether in person or virtual!

Thank you to our employer members and associate members for your ongoing engagement!

We hope you enjoy this latest e-Version of the LVBCH Quarterly News Notes!

[Visit our Website](#)

Welcome Message



Carl Seitz
President, LVBCH

As we complete the first quarter of 2022, we want to thank everyone who was able to join us in-person at the 9th Annual Healthcare Systems Engineering Symposium with Lehigh University, and all who continue to engage with the Coalition virtually and remotely.

In follow up to the symposium, we encourage you to [register](#) for the National Hospital Price Transparency Conference from the Employers' Forum of Indiana including the results of the latest RAND 4.0 study.

We are excited about returning to in-person after three years for the 42nd Annual Conference, Wednesday, May 11, at DeSales University. We look forward to seeing you - please [register now!](#)

We also hope you will "save-the-dates" for the following in-person events:

- Education in the Vineyard
 - Thursday, June 16 at Folino with EyeMed
 - Thursday, July 14 at Weathered with Express Scripts
 - Thursday, August 18 at Stony Run with AmeriHealth
- 1st Annual Legislative Roundtable
 - Thursday, September 15
 - At Glasbern Inn

We also remain committed to the health and safety of our members, and will continue to offer live webinars to best meet your needs and interests.

We look forward to seeing you in-person or virtually this summer!

Welcome New Members

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to our new Coalition members - We encourage all members to get involved and participate in Coalition activities!

- Centivo

[View All LVBCH Members Here](#)

LVBCH Updates

LVBCH Board Announces New Partnership

Health Advocate - Employee Assistance Program Partner



The Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare (LVBCH) has selected Health Advocate as the Coalition's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Partner for in-person, telephonic, and virtual EAP behavioral health services, including telephonic and web-based support for work/life services. In making this selection, the LVBCH Board of Directors has endorsed Health Advocate as a Preferred Partner for Employee Assistance Program Services.

Health Advocate participated in an extensive review process. To earn the Coalition's Preferred Partner status, they had to demonstrate better plan performance, pricing, or enhanced service capabilities, giving employers benefits and benefit administration options that best meet their needs. Using a market-based approach, the Coalition negotiates rates that are exclusive to its members and better than individual employers could obtain on their own. Health Advocate's preferred pricing for LVBCH members is available immediately.

[Read the Press Release](#)

LVBCH Board Announces New Partnerships

ELMC Rx & KPCM - Pharmacy Cost Savings Partners



The Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare (LVBCH) has selected ELMC Rx Solutions' Prescription Drug Cost Containment Services and Keenan Pharmacy Services' Keenan Pharmacy Clinical Management Program as the Coalition's Pharmacy Cost Savings Partners. In making the selection, the LVBCH Board of Directors has endorsed these two organizations as Preferred Partners for their pharmacy cost savings programs.

Both organizations participated in an extensive review process. To earn the Coalition's Preferred Partner status, they had to demonstrate better performance, pricing, or enhanced service capabilities, providing employers with increased control over the costs associated with their pharmacy benefits. Using a market-based approach, the Coalition negotiates rates that are exclusive to its members and better than individual employers could obtain on their own. The new pricing for both programs is available now.

[Read the Press Release](#)

LVBCH & CBC Partnership Generate Savings

Delivering More than \$1.5 Million Per Year in Savings to Members



The ongoing partnership between the Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare and Capital Blue Cross is generating nearly \$1.5 million a year in healthcare savings to participating Coalition employer members.

The LVBCH and Capital Blue Cross have a preferred partnership that ensures Coalition members can benefit from Capital's high-quality, cost-efficient group health insurance. Capital also collaborates with the Coalition to develop programs and services that specifically benefit LVBCH members.

LVBCH grants preferred partner status to health insurers that demonstrate better plan performance, pricing, or enhanced service capabilities, giving employers who belong to the Coalition more flexibility to select healthcare coverage that best meets the needs of their businesses and employees.

[Read the Press Release](#)

Upcoming Events

[Register Now](#)



42nd Annual Conference

Moving Forward in 2022: Employers Working Together to Improve Healthcare Value

- Wednesday, May 11, 2022
- 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- At DeSales University, Center Valley, PA

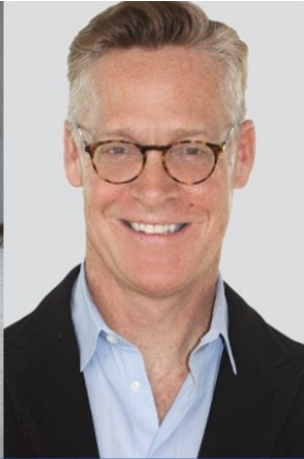
[Register Now - 5/11/2022 All Are Welcome to Attend](#)

[More Information - 5/11/2022 - Annual Conference](#)

Annual Conference Presenters Announced:



Suzanne Delbanco
Catalyst for Payment Reform



Ford Koles
Advisory Board



Bert Alicea
Health Advocate



Dr. Marty Makary
Johns Hopkins University

[Annual Conference Presenters - Read the Press Release](#)

Thank You Annual Conference Sponsors & Exhibitors

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Save-the-Dates

Education in the Vineyard

- Thursday, June 16 at Folino with EyeMed
- Thursday, July 14 at Weathered with Express Scripts
- Thursday, August 18 at Stoney Run with AmeriHealth

1st Annual Legislative Roundtable

- Thursday, September 15, 2022
- At the Glasbern Inn

More information about these events and registration information will be coming soon!

Employer Forum



All LVBCH Employer Members are invited to participate in this ongoing peer-to-peer discussion between local employers on the topics most important to you!

Save-the-Date: The next employer forum is scheduled for:

- Thursday, June 9, 2022;
- 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
- Via Zoom

For more information or to register please contact Donna Corsi: dmcorsi@lvbch.com.

Recent Events

Broker Event: Keenan Pharmacy Services

Broker Event

Are High-Cost Prescriptions a Threat to Self-Insured Employer Healthcare? Successful Strategies to Mitigate and Avoid High-Cost Pharmacy Claims

Wednesday, March 23, 2022



- Aster Event Center, Hyatt - Allentown, PA

9th Annual Symposium

Lehigh University Healthcare Systems Engineering

9TH ANNUAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS ENGINEERING SYMPOSIUM

EMPLOYER DRIVEN HOSPITAL PRICE TRANSPARENCY

11:00am to
2:00pm
EST

March
22

Iacocca Hall
111 Research Drive.
Bethlehem, PA

*Registration required

Join us for:

- Lunch & Networking
- Keynote Presentation
- Expert Reaction
- Audience Discussion

LVBCHSM

Employers for Healthcare Value Since 1980



LEHIGH
UNIVERSITY

HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS
ENGINEERING

- Aster Event Center, Hyatt - Allentown, PA

[Read the Summary](#)

[Watch the Recording](#)

[Slides: Sachdev & Whaley](#)

[Slides: Hayes](#)

Thank You Symposium Sponsors & Exhibitors

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Webinar: Worksite Health Clinics - Part II

Worksite Health Centers - A Deeper Dive

Worksite Health Clinics – Part 2:

Worksite Health Clinics: A Deeper Dive

Thursday, March 10, 2022



[Watch the Recording](#)

[View the Slides](#)

Broker CE Event: Clarity Benefit Solutions

Staying Connected: Enhancing the Human Element of HR through Benefit Technology

Broker CE Event

Staying Connected: Enhancing the Human Element of HR through Benefit Technology

Thursday, March 3, 2022



- Melt Restaurant - Center Valley, PA

Worksite Health Clinics – Part 1: The Landscape & Value of Worksite Health Clinics Thursday, January 27, 2022



[Watch the Recording](#)

[View the Slides](#)

Webinar: Clarity Benefit Solutions *Introducing Clarity: Online Benefits Administration Partner*

Introducing Clarity: Online Benefits Administration Partner

Tuesday, January 18, 2022



[Watch the Recording](#)

[View the Slides](#)

National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions (NAHPC) Updates



LVBCH partners with the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions to drive innovation, health, and value through the collective action of public and private purchasers. Together, both organizations seek to accelerate the nation's progress toward safe, efficient, high-quality healthcare and the improved status of the American population.

National Alliance Webinar: Employer Townhall

Implications of the Omicron Variant: What's Next for Employers?

As issues related to the pandemic continue to emerge, employers face unforeseeable challenges. Physicians, coalition leaders, and employers will address several top-of-mind topics:

- Navigating evolving COVID policy (e.g., 5-day rule)
- Staying the course: Vaccinations, masks, social distancing, hygiene
- Integrating home testing into current employee health strategies
- Reviewing the impact of emerging COVID-19 treatments
- Preparing for the implications of long-COVID as a chronic disease
- Addressing evolving mental health and caregiver challenges

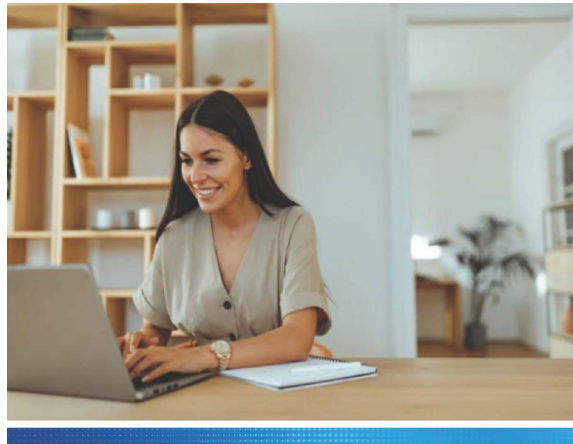
[Watch the 2/17/2022 Webinar Recording](#)

[View Presentation Slides](#)

Immunizations & High-Value Care: Identifying Opportunities for Employer Action in Uncertain Times (February 2022)

Immunizations & High-Value Care

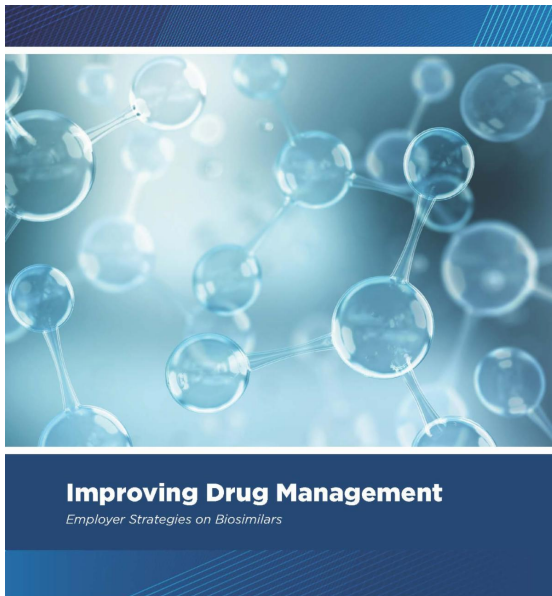
Identifying Opportunities for Employer Action in Uncertain Times



2022

[Read the Report](#)

Improving Drug Management: Employer Strategies on Biosimilars



2022

[Read the Report](#)

SPECIAL EDITION WITH EMPLOYER CASE STUDIES

ACTION BRIEF

Employer Strategies that Drive Health, Equity and Value



IMPROVING DRUG MANAGEMENT

EMPLOYER BIOSIMILAR STRATEGIES

Why Biosimilars Matter

A biosimilar is a biologic medication that is highly similar to a biological medication already approved by the FDA—the original biologic. (Also called the reference product). Clinically, biosimilars do not differ meaningfully from their reference products. This means patients can expect the same safety and effectiveness from the biosimilar over the course of treatment as they would from the reference product. Biologics are important and successful—but very expensive—medicines used to treat numerous serious diseases. Biosimilars are a more affordable option for patients and plan sponsors. To learn more, the FDA offers comprehensive educational resources.

Reduced barriers to biosimilar adoption could generate savings of about \$25 billion over 10 years, or roughly 0.5% of national spending on prescription drugs. Some organizations, such as the Association for Accessible Medicines (AAM), think biosimilar savings could even exceed \$120 billion by 2025, but only if policymakers encourage greater adoption.

To help employers understand and overcome obstacles to biosimilar uptake, thus improving care and lowering costs, the National Alliance brought together seven regional coalitions and more than 60 employers for a series of roundtables across the country. These top recommendations for employers emerged from the roundtables.

- 1. Plan Design.** Amend coverage and communications to prioritize biosimilars and cover biomarker testing; implement overall plan design that minimizes member disruption; limit any charges or grandfather current members' treatment cycles.
- 2. Formulary Design.** Insist on total transparency of formulary placement and, specifically, the economics of biosimilars; consider custom formulary design and targeted utilization management.



3. Drug Pricing and Rebates.

Focus on low net cost, while also considering the impact of gross cost on employee cost-sharing; understand how rebates affect overall drug pricing.

4. Drug Availability. Ensure coverage of high-value biosimilars at an appropriate tier level; as lack of coverage can stagnate the market over time; use incentives to encourage adoption of all biosimilars in the same drug class over the reference product.

5. Sites of Care and Drug Administration.

Focus on the impact the site of care has on the cost of delivery; consider a preferred/injectable site-of-care policy (e.g., drugs infused in a hospital setting can be twice as expensive as drugs infused at home, in a clinic, or at an infusion center).



[View the full report!](#)

[Read the Action Brief](#)

Leading By Example and Moving Upstream Together: A Fresh Look at Addressing Social Needs and Social Determinants of the Workplace

Leading by Example AND Moving Upstream Together

A FRESH LOOK AT ADDRESSING SOCIAL NEEDS AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF THE WORKFORCE



[Read the Report](#)

ACTION BRIEF

Employer Strategies that Drive Health, Equity and Value



LEADING BY EXAMPLE AND MOVING UPSTREAM TOGETHER

A FRESH LOOK AT ADDRESSING SOCIAL NEEDS AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF THE WORKFORCE

A key issue facing the American healthcare system is the impact of social needs, social risks, and social determinants of health (SDoH) in healthcare. Each of these "social" terms brings a slightly different focus to forces that can impact communities and their members. For employers, understanding these impacts within the context of a population health strategy can

foster a broader approach to closing gaps in care and ensuring access to services across racially, culturally and ethnically diverse employee populations.

To learn what employers need to begin their journey to more effectively addressing social needs, social risks, and social determinants, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office of the



Associate Director for Policy and Strategy, the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), and the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions (National Alliance) began a collaboration in late 2020 to engage employers and regional business coalitions through the project, "Leading by Example and Moving Upstream Together." The goal was to identify options for developing a process model to enhance employee and community well-being.

This Action Brief is a summary of the project; the full project report is found here.



Equality vs. Equity

- Equality means everyone is given the same resources/opportunities.
- Equity requires recognition that each person has unique needs and allocating resources/opportunities in ways that result in equal outcomes.

Defining Health Disparities

Health disparities are preventable differences in mortality, life expectancy, burden of disease, mental health, prevalence of the uninsured/underinsured, and lack of access to care among socially disadvantaged racial, ethnic, and other groups and communities. Learn more from the CDC resources provided on the next page.

[Read the Action Brief](#)

Leapfrog Updates



LVBCH continues to develop its relationship with the Leapfrog Group, serving as a Regional Leader. In this role, LVBCH invites and encourages hospitals across Pennsylvania to complete the annual Hospital Survey that assesses hospital safety, quality, and efficiency based on national performance measures.

Webinar: CAA Compliance Series

Many employers don't realize that the new Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), a federal law, is now in effect and has a seismic shift on their liability. For the first time, employers and other purchasers, not TPAs, are on the hook for health benefits that are cost-effective, high quality, and meet mental health parity and pharmacy benefit requirements.

Learn about your CAA responsibilities in the Leapfrog Compliance Webinar Series. Join for tips and tools for getting started from series partners: the ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC), the Health Transformation Alliance (HTA), and the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions.

Session 3: Five Key Actions for CAA Pharmacy Benefit Compliance

[Watch the Recording](#)

[View the Slides & Toolkit](#)

Session 2: New Mental Health Parity Requirements: Are You Ready?

Watch the Recording

View the Slides & Toolkit

Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4) Updates

Report: COVID-19 Hospitalizations - Mar 20 to Jun 21 (March 2022)

COVID-19 Disaster Emergency Report (January 2022)

PA Health Care Cost Containment Council
PHC4
COVID-19 Analyses

March 2022
COVID-19 Hospitalizations – March 2020 to June 2021

This research brief examines patients who were hospitalized with COVID-19 and discharged from a Pennsylvania acute care hospital from March 2020 through June 2021. Rates of hospitalization and in-hospital mortality are examined by month as well as for the entire time period, with a closer look at differences by age and race/ethnicity. The findings in this report were not adjusted for age or other patient characteristics to avoid masking important sociodemographic differences.

- There were **120,329** hospitalizations with COVID-19 from March 2020 through June 2021 in Pennsylvania hospitals. Pennsylvania residents were hospitalized at a rate of **91.5** hospitalizations per 10,000 residents during this time period.
- The average length of stay was **8.1** days.
- 12.3%** of the patients died during their hospitalization.
- 10.2%** of the patients required mechanical ventilation.
- 14.9%** of the patients were readmitted to a Pennsylvania hospital within 30 days.

After the initial peak of 8,391 in April 2020, the number of monthly COVID-19 hospitalizations decreased through September 2020, but then increased to a second, much higher peak of 24,506 in December 2020. This was followed by a third peak of 10,641 hospitalizations in April 2021. More than half (53%) of all the COVID-19 hospitalizations during this time frame occurred in the period from November 2020 through February 2021.

Number of COVID-19 Hospitalizations by Month

Discharge Month	Number of Hospitalizations
Mar 2020	735
Apr 2020	8,391
May 2020	6,885
Jun 2020	3,166
Jul 2020	2,580
Aug 2020	2,444
Sep 2020	2,065
Oct 2020	3,807
Nov 2020	11,679
Dec 2020	24,506
Jan 2021	18,940
Feb 2021	8,991
Mar 2021	6,679
Apr 2021	10,641
May 2021	6,589
Jun 2021	2,231

COVID-19 Disaster Emergency Report

Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council

A Pennsylvania report on the effect of the COVID-19 disaster emergency on hospitals and health care facilities in the Commonwealth

Submitted to:

The Secretary of the Department of Health and the Secretary of the Department of Human Services.

The Chair and Minority Chair of the Appropriations Committee of the Senate and the Chair and Minority Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee of the Senate.

The Chair and Minority Chair of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, the Chair and Minority Chair of the Health Committee of the House of Representatives and the Chair and Minority Chair of the Human Services Committee of the House of Representatives.

January 2022



Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council
Barry D. Buckingham, Executive Director
225 Market Street, Suite 400, Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-232-6787 • www.phc4.org

Read the Report

Read the Report

Special Data Requests Update (January 2022)

PHC4's New Executive Director

After thirty years of distinguished service to the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4), Joe Martin retired as PHC4's Executive Director. Recently PHC4 welcomed Barry D. Buckingham as the new Executive Director of PHC4. Mr. Buckingham, a medical economist, has a long history of medical and government experience, having worked for the Pennsylvania Medical Society, Capital Blue Cross, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services among other organizations.

[More Details](#)

PHC4 Research Briefs

COVID-19 Hospitalizations in Pennsylvania



This research brief examines patients of all ages who were hospitalized with a COVID-19 diagnosis and discharged from a Pennsylvania acute care hospital from March through September 2020. County rates as well as rates and outcomes by patient characteristics are presented. Specific information is provided about patients who also had a diagnosis of sepsis.

[More Details](#)

Maternal Hospitalizations and Sepsis



This research brief focuses on patients who were hospitalized for a delivery or other pregnancy-related condition who also had a diagnosis of sepsis. Included are patients discharged from a Pennsylvania acute care hospital from October 2015 through September 2020. County rates are presented.

[More Details](#)

Data Release

Administrative & Revenue Data

Second quarter 2021 inpatient and ambulatory/outpatient administrative and revenue data is available for purchase. Third quarter 2021 data is scheduled to be released April 2022.

Utilization Reports

PHC4's online [inpatient](#) and [ambulatory/outpatient](#) utilization summary statistics based on county residents have been updated on [PHC4's website](#) with second quarter 2021 data.

Financial Data

Fiscal year 2020 hospital and ambulatory surgery center financial data is available for purchase.

[Read the Report](#)

Purchasing Partner Employer Meetings



LVBCH & Capital Blue Cross Quarterly Employer Meeting (March 2022)

Guest Articles from Purchasing Partners



Addressing Health Equity Benefits All of Us



EXPRESS SCRIPTS®

Fighting the Obesity Epidemic Calls for a Multifaceted Approach



The Challenges of Accurately Repricing Pharmacy Benefit Manager Claims

FDA Provides New Guidance to Enhance Prescription Drug Supply Chain

Welcome Spring - Good Nutrition Supports Good Teeth



Your All-Seeing Eyes

Maximize Your Workplace Well-Being Program by Integrating Emotional Wellness



A Witness to Strength, Resilience & Determination

A Look Inside Employee Expectations and Mindset: How to Understand a Challenging Workforce

An FSA Covers More than Just Dental & Vision: Help Employees See a Bigger Picture

The Rise of Telehealth and Virtual Care: What You Need to Know

Human Connection is Part of Well-Being

Special Guest Articles

Early Detection of Lung Cancer: What Employees Should Know



The Importance of Lung Cancer Screening for Veterans

The Importance of Screening for Lung Cancer

Importance of Detecting Lung Cancer Early

Lung Cancer and COVID-19: Impact of the Pandemic on Screening and Diagnosis

The Time to Act is Now and with Urgency

Help Your Patients Understand the Importance of Cancer Screening

60 West Broad St. • Suite 306 • Bethlehem, PA 18018 • P: 610-317-0130

Our affiliation with these national organizations is a value-added benefit for our members.

