

President's Message

Today's fast-paced world, filled with meetings and devices keeping us connected, no longer allows for the lazy summer days of old. Instead, this summer the Coalition was bustling with activity.

During the past several months, LVBCH held many in-person and online events. We hosted several employer meetings with our benefit partners, Capital BlueCross and Geneia, and participated in the first BSI CORE event. We also offered educational sessions including a webinar with EyeMed, a Medical Marijuana Update for our members in Berks County, an introductory program for our partners in the northeast at MAEA, and our first program with new medical partner Geisinger Health Plan.

Meanwhile, the Education and Wellness Committee has diligently been planning upcoming educational programs, including a screening of the documentary, "A Touch of Sugar," scheduled for October 9, 2019 at ArtsQuest. The film discusses one of the most serious health concerns facing our community, diabetes. LVBCH has been a leader in shedding light on the growing prevalence of this disease in our area, releasing the 7th Edition of our Type 2 Diabetes Report this September.

LVBCH also remains committed to educating employers about healthcare trends and the legislation that affects them. We encourage you to consider attending the Annual Forum of the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions from November 11-13, 2019 in Washington, DC. This year's theme is "Employers Driving Innovation Health and Value." Interested employer members should talk to Coalition staff to learn how they may be able to attend at no cost!

Speaking of conferences, we are already hard at work planning our 40th Anniversary Annual Conference on May 6, 2020. We expect this to be our best yet, with the announcement of keynote speakers coming soon! Help us to celebrate this milestone by saving the date and planning to attend.

The Coalition also continues to serve as your advocate with local providers. As the recipient of the *Forging Collaboration Between Employer Purchasers and High-Performing Medical Groups* Grant from the Council for Accountable Physician Practices, we hosted local employers in a roundtable discussion on how physicians and employers can better work together to improve healthcare outcomes for patients.

Concurrently, the purchasing committee continues to expand and improve the benefit options that we offer employers. We expect more announcements in the near future, and additional activity into the New Year!

Finally, supporting community organizations is a Coalition priority. Please stop by our exhibit table at the SHRMLV Conference on October 21-22, 2019. Also, on October 26, 2019, we will sponsor the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer – Lehigh Valley event. Join our walking team or visit our exhibit table.

To find out more about Coalition activities, please take the time to read our newsletter and visit our website at lvbch.com. If you are interested in getting more involved, contact Donna Corsi, Director of Member Programs and Services at dmcorsi@lvbch.com.

Thank you and enjoy the cooler temperatures and beautiful colors of Autumn,



Carl Seitz,
LVBCH President



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to the following new members of the Coalition as we encourage them to participate in Coalition activities:

- ◆ Keenan & Associates
- ◆ Right Rx, LLC

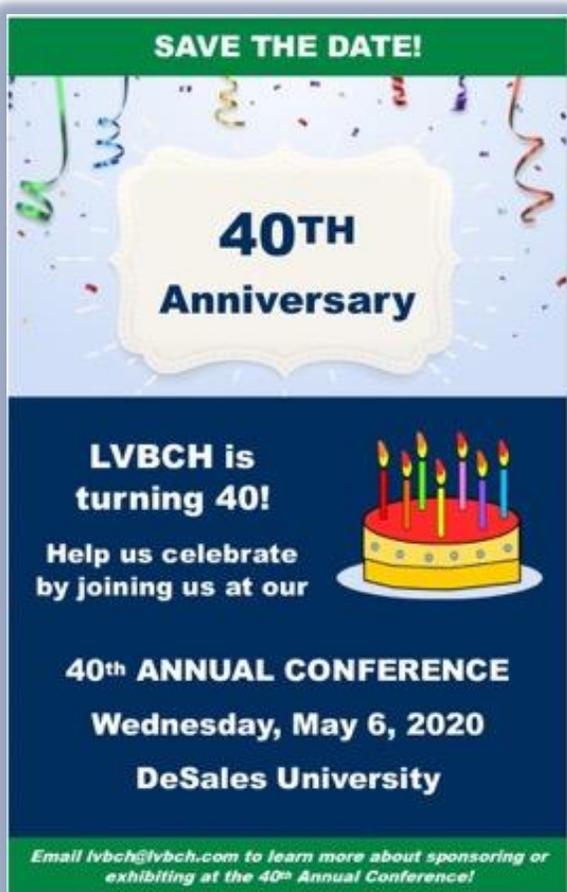
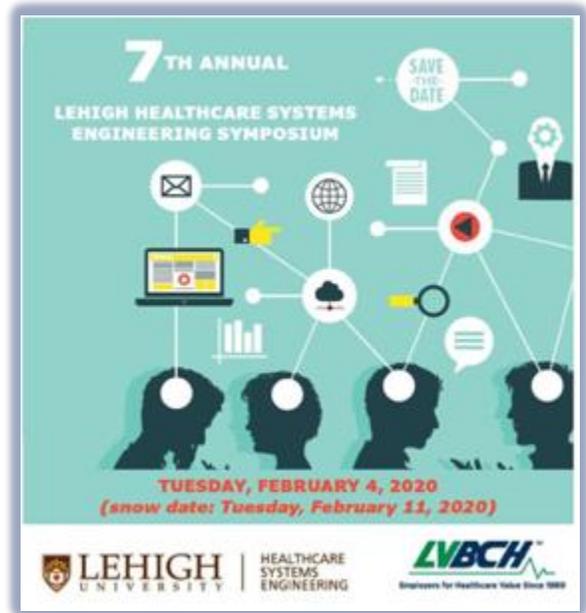
UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the Date

Be sure to mark your calendar for the upcoming LVBCH Events:

Lehigh University 7th Annual Healthcare Systems Engineering Symposium

- February 4, 2020
- *Snow date: February 11, 2020*
- At Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA
- All are invited to attend



LVBCH's 40th Anniversary Annual Conference

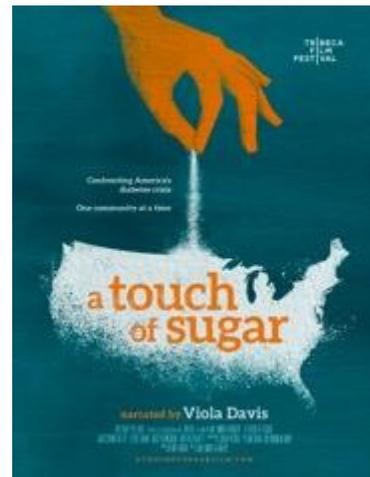
- May 6, 2020
- At DeSales University, Center Valley, PA
- All are invited to attend

Please join us in celebrating this milestone!

Register for the Screening of “A Touch of Sugar”

- ◆ **Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2019** **Time: 8:30-11:30 am**
- ◆ **Frank Banko Theater, ArtsQuest, 101 Founders Way, Bethlehem, PA**
- ◆ **Co-sponsored with Lehigh University’s Healthcare Systems Engineering Program**
- ◆ **Sponsored by BeneFIT/Populytics, Livongo and Merck**

In response to the increased prevalence of diabetes throughout our area, LVBCH aims to raise awareness of this health concern by screening the documentary, “A Touch of Sugar.” An expert reaction panel will follow the screening.



Register

An Interview with Moderator Christina Lewis



Christina Lewis, RN, MPH, Executive Director, St. Luke’s Care Network, will moderate the panel discussion. *News Notes* recently interviewed Chris about the upcoming event.

Q: What is the documentary about?

The film dives into the diabetes healthcare epidemic that affects every community in the United States, including our own. It is narrated by actress Viola Davis and is told through the voices of people struggling with this chronic disease. The documentary includes interviews with patients and their loved ones, as well as doctors, advocates, and thought leaders. It explores the larger diabetes ecosystem at work and helps to reinforce type 2 diabetes as an urgent public health issue that cannot be ignored, especially among underserved populations.

Q: Who will participate in the opinion panel?

We have assembled a very diverse panel offering a well-rounded perspective of the issue. The panelists are:

- **Virginia Peddicord**, Director, Global Employee Population Health, Merck
- **Jay Solomon**, Director, Business Analytics Services, Geneia
- **Tiffany Ritter**, RD, LDN, Health Coach, BeneFIT/Populytics
- **Anoop Sangha**, VP Clinical Affairs, Livongo

Q: What will the panel be discussing?

We will look at some of the factors that contribute to the increase in diabetes and the approaches that are being used to address this. We’ll discuss what works, why it works, and how you can increase engagement.

Q: The film deals with the stigma of diabetes. Will you be addressing that?

Yes. We often blame the individual who has diabetes for eating poorly or for not getting enough exercise. As health care providers, we need to check our own biases. The problem is not the person with diabetes but the culture we live in. We must meet people where they are and provide them the education and support that they need to make positive changes, taking into account age, education, language and genetic factors. We need to recognize economic influences. If you go up and down the aisles of a discount grocery store, you will find carbs, carbs, and more carbs. How can we teach the patient to eat well, not only the right amount, but also the type of food, and how to prepare it? How can we provide access to fresh, healthy, affordable food and help them get adequate exercise when they have limited time, cannot afford a gym membership, and don’t live near a park?

Q: Will you be discussing how diabetes affects employers?

Yes. The number of employees with diabetes, as well as pre-diabetes is growing. Left unaddressed, a much larger percentage of employees will have diabetes in the near future. Just what effect does this have on the workplace in terms of absenteeism and presenteeism, not to mention health plan costs?

We will also discuss whether employers share responsibility for their employees’ wellness and what form that might take. For example, how does the health plan affect the patient’s compliance with doctor’s instructions? If employees have a high deductible, can they afford medication and supplies? Does the work environment encourage exercise and healthy eating? Do they offer healthy, affordable meals in the cafeteria? What’s in the vending machines? How can we as providers and insurers help employers help employees beat diabetes?

Q&A with LVBCH Board Member Fay Knabb



Please join LVBCH in welcoming new Board and Purchasing Committee member **Fay Knabb**, Benefits Manager, East Penn Manufacturing Co. *News Notes* recently asked Fay a few questions.

Q: Why did you become involved with LVBCH?

I joined East Penn Manufacturing a year ago and was named to the Board as my predecessor, former LVBCH Board Chair Bob Johnston, was retiring. Bob had been involved with the Coalition and the Board for many years, as has East Penn Manufacturing, and I wanted to continue that relationship.

Q: What impresses you most about LVBCH?

I'm impressed by Carl's leadership. Also, he has a strong team to carry out the Coalition's business. LVBCH is an excellent advocate for all members, regardless of their size.

Q: What are the biggest benefits of membership?

As the Coalition approaches its 40th anniversary year, its pooled purchasing arrangements are very powerful in the marketplace and benefit both large and small companies. All companies, but especially those with limited resources, can gain from the expertise of the Coalition and its members who serve on the Board and various committees for everyone's benefit. There are also high-quality educational seminars on timely topics, the Annual Conference, and networking opportunities with other employers.

Q: How have you personally benefitted from being part of the Coalition?

In my past roles I developed benefit programs for employees along the East Coast and beyond, primarily in the financial services industry. Not only was it an exciting change, making the transition to manufacturing, but it has also been an opportunity to focus on healthcare here in the Lehigh Valley. Networking with Coalition members quickly brought me up to speed regarding local healthcare providers and services. Also, I've enjoyed participating on the Purchasing Committee and the Board. Both provide the opportunity to really engage in decision making and enable us to bring forward the best recommendations for the membership.

LVBCH receives CAPP Grant “Forging Collaboration Between Employer Purchasers and High-Performing Medical Groups”

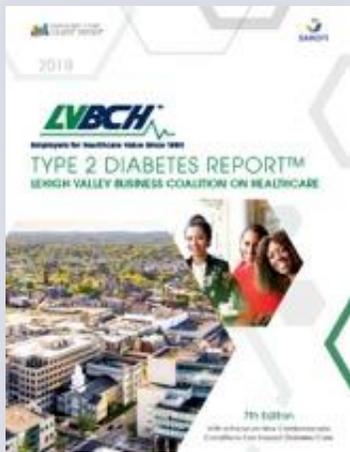
Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare was one of five National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions selected as a recipient of the Council for Accountable Physician Practices (CAPP) grant. CAPP is a non-profit coalition of more than 30 physician-led, multi-specialty medical groups and health systems, representing more than 80,000 physicians who believe in value-based, accountable care.

As part of the grant opportunity, LVBCH facilitated an invite-only, roundtable of local employers discussing how physicians can better communicate and work with employers to improve healthcare outcomes for patients. The roundtable, held at the LVBCH offices on September 17, 2019 included employers of various sizes and representing diverse industries, The discussion provided an opportunity for employers to share thoughts and needs directly with the provider audience. This process serves as a first step to foster a collaborative working relationship between employers and care providers. A report summarizing results of the nationwide roundtables is expected this fall.



Standing (left to right) Carl Seitz and Amanda Greene, LVBCH; facilitator Sophia Gomez; Fay Knabb, East Penn Manufacturing Co., Toyomi Igus, CAPP, Lisa Bogert, Schlouch Incorporated; Tony Pidgeon, Allentown School District; Patricia Tetreault, University of Scranton. Sitting (left to right) Mary Cappabianca, CAPP; Liz Tavarez, City of Reading; Geri Garza, City of Allentown; Patti Florkowsk, Lehigh University

LVBCH Releases 2019 Type 2 Diabetes Report



Click on the picture to read the report

A1c levels among working adults in many local areas are high, compared with both state national benchmarks, according to the 2019 LVBCH Type 2 Diabetes Report released in September. An A1c test measures blood sugar levels.

The share of commercial Type 2 diabetes patients with an A1c level above 9.0% topped the corresponding Pennsylvania benchmark of 13.8% and the U.S. of 14.4% in 2018. Levels that exceeded state and national benchmarks were: Harrisburg, 17.9%; Reading, 15.6%; and Scranton, 16.3%.

The seventh edition of the report offers a broad overview of the state of diabetes in markets within the Lehigh Valley and throughout the Commonwealth. Of all the regions included, Allentown, has the highest rates of Type 2 diabetes among working age adults.

In commenting on the report, LVBCH President Carl Seitz stated, “Diabetes is a major factor in employer spending for medical care, and its impact on other conditions can further exacerbate the health status of employees. By identifying employees with diabetes, and providing the care they need, employers can maintain a healthier and more productive workforce. We thank our partner Sanofi US for their support of this important healthcare-related study.”

Pennsylvania and national benchmarks help identify potential gaps in care and reinforce positive trends. The most recent data, current as of calendar year 2018 and spanning several years, encompass nearly 12 million unique patients nationally with a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes – of these, 429,000 reside in Pennsylvania.

News Release

LVBCH Supports Community Organizations

LVBCH supported EPAHEN’s 2019 Healthcare Symposium on September 20, 2019 at the Hotel Bethlehem as a Platinum sponsor and exhibitor. EPAHEN is an independent chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives.



LVBCH joins MAEA in celebrating with all member companies “National Manufacturing Day” on October 4, 2019.



SAVE THE DATE:

October 21-22, 2019 at the Lehigh Valley Hotel, Bethlehem, PA
LVBCH will be exhibiting at the SHRMLV October Conference: People, Purpose and Passion. Stop by our table to learn more!



SAVE THE DATE:

Saturday, October 26, 2019, at the SteelStacks, ArtsQuest, Bethlehem, PA
LVBCH is pleased to support organizations that improve the health of the community. As part of its 2019 support, LVBCH is sponsoring and exhibiting at Making Strides Against Breast Cancer – Lehigh Valley. All members are invited to join LVBCH at this walk!



Second Webinar from Vision Benefit Provider – EyeMed

August 9, 2019, EyeMed Webinar, Recording on Website



EyeMed, LVBCH's new vision plan partner, offers flexible design plans that include comprehensive eye exams and lenses, as well as allowances for frames and contact lens, **Brian Boose**, Regional Vice President, EyeMed, said during the August 9, 2019 webinar.

EyeMed combines helpful communications, online tools and award-winning customer service to make its benefits easy for employees to use. In fact, 98% of clients responding to a satisfaction survey agreed that EyeMed's benefits were easy to use. Tools include a customer service line available 102 hours a week, an app and a website.

EyeMed summarizes its advantages as:

- The vision care network that members want with a mix of independent, retail, and online Vision benefits
- Data driven solutions that have your members in mind
- An experience that makes vision benefits easy for both members and clients

EyeMed Webinar

Medical Marijuana Update – What Employers Need to Know

August 22, 2019 at Penn State Berks Campus, Reading, PA

The fact that medical marijuana is now legal in Pennsylvania, while it remains illegal under Federal Law, presents an everchanging landscape, filled with many employer questions. In follow up to January's educational medical marijuana event, another Employer Forum was held for employers in Berks County and beyond to hear presentations and ask questions of clinical and legal experts.

Christopher Walsh, Medication Safety Pharmacist, Penn State Health St. Joseph Medical Center, presented the "Health Effects of Cannabis." This presentation provided employers with a working knowledge of terminology related to cannabis, the therapeutic uses of cannabis – including pain management, and the occupational hazards and considerations that employers should be aware of.



Speziale, Christopher Walsh and LVBCH Board Member Fay Knabb, East Penn Manufacturing Co.

Walsh's Presentation

Loren L. Speziale, Esq., Attorney at Law, Gross McGinley, LLP, presented "Medical Marijuana: Legal Considerations." This presentation reviewed the challenges faced by employers whose goal is a drug-free workplace, while marijuana remains illegal at the federal level, and state laws vary. It also provided an overview of legal versus illegal use in Pennsylvania and other important considerations for employers, such as addressing the anti-discrimination provision, the Office of Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Department of Transportation (DOT).

Speziale's Presentation

Coalition Introduces MAEA to LVBCH Member Benefits

September 10, 2019 at Mountain Valley Golf Course, Barnesville, PA

Members of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Manufacturers and Employers Association attended an LVBCH-sponsored event to introduce a variety of options for medical, pharmacy, dental, vision, and more.



Presenters included: **Pete Sarpong**, Senior Sales Executive, EyeMed; **Hugh Gallagher**, VP, Sales and Business Development, Benecard; **Nick Tranguch**, Vice President of Sales and Acquisition, BSI Corporate Benefits, LLC; **Damien Golden**, Manager, Existing Accounts and Major Market, Capital BlueCross; **Erica Hain**, Senior Director, Commercial Sales, Geisinger Health Plan; **Linda Devlin**, Senior Client Manager, United Concordia Dental; **Scott Fair**, Vice President Insurance Services, USI Insurance Services.



Geisinger Health Plan Explains How It is Changing Healthcare Delivery

October 25, 2019 at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA

Allison Hess, Vice President, Health and Wellness, Geisinger Health Plan, presented, "Wellness & Population Health." The presentation featured updates on the ProvenHealth Navigator, case management, and telemonitoring - including ReDS technology. Hess also discussed the Fresh Food Farmacy program, and online wellness services.

Hess's Presentation

Jonas Pearson, Account Manager, Pharmacy Client Services, Geisinger Health Plan, presented, "Pharmacy Updates." The presentation focused on point-of-sale rebates, specialty drugs, and opioids.

Pearson's Presentation

Scott Wham, National Vice-Chair, Legislative Council, National Association of Health Underwriters (NAHU), presented, "The Beginnings of a Healthcare Renaissance." The presentation provided insight into the 2019 NAHU's Legislative Priorities. Addressed in these priorities are employer issues, the individual market, Medicare, healthcare costs, and single payer. A deeper dive of priorities of interest to employers included employer exclusion, Cadillac/excise tax, Health Insurance Tax (HIT), employer reporting, Employee Flexibility Act, market stability, COBRA, health savings accounts, and balance/surprise billing, as well as a peak into the proposed "Medicare for All" legislation.

Wham's Presentation



More than 100 Guests Attend First BSI CORE Partnership Meeting

BSI Corporate Benefits reported that its benefit product designed specifically to control the healthcare costs of employers with 50-1,000 employees significantly exceeded clients' expectations in 2019. The average savings for a 100-life employer in BSI CORE was \$310,700.

The news was shared with more than 100 guests at BSI CORE's inaugural meeting on August 27, 2019 at Saucon Valley Country Club. During the meeting, the BSI team and its trusted partners shared new BSI CORE enhancements, resulting from its continued rapid growth.

BSI CORE partners shared 2020 renewal enhancements that employers can benefit from as a result of the significant leveraged buying power of the BSI CORE model. In addition, the following BSI CORE partners spoke: **Mark Kender, MD**, and **Sarah Weimer**, St. Luke's University Health Network; **James Hechler**, the Benecon Group; **Carl Seitz**, LVBCH; and **Tony Elder**, HealthiestYou. The meeting was followed by lunch, networking on the terrace and a round of golf on Saucon's beautiful courses.



Geneia Discusses Employee Burnout at Quarterly Meeting

Each year, employee burnout accounts for \$125 to \$190 billion in healthcare spending due to an increase in diabetes, heart disease, increased weight, high cholesterol, and mental health issues, Geneia reported at its LVBCH quarterly meeting on September 4, 2019.

But, when performance measures are within their control, 55% of employees are less likely to experience burnout. Also, 43% of employees are less likely to have high level burnout when they have job control and flexibility. When considering back pain though, other factors have a greater impact than burnout. A survey found causes of back pain were often attributed to stress, 29%; weight, 25%; and sitting at a desk, 20%.

Geneia reported that employers spend more on musculoskeletal disorders than any other condition. Also, an inpatient analysis revealed a shift from members in the 60+ age group to those under age 19. This shift likely resulted in a decrease in inpatient stays, emergency department visits, and the total amount paid.



Capital BlueCross to Offer Diabetes Prevention Program

To reduce employers' costs related to diabetes – one of the top drivers of claims payments – Capital BlueCross will begin offering a diabetes prevention program (DPP) to self-insured large groups later this fall. The program will help to identify adults (18 and older) at risk of developing diabetes and provide them with resources to reduce their risk. Through this achievement-based program, which takes 60 days to implement, groups will pay \$155 per member per goal met. The DPP can provide a wellness incentive through the Healthy Blue Rewards Program. Contact your account executive to learn more about the program.

Alexa and Google Voice Skills – *New!* Capital BlueCross is providing a public education tool to help people learn about health care terms and how to navigate common healthcare coverage concerns. My Cap BlueCross is a voice-enabled skill that introduces healthcare education through voice technology. For example, users can say, "Alexa, what's a deductible?" Then the device will define "deductible" in everyday words.

Member Registration Campaign. Capital BlueCross is finishing a registration campaign that encourages members to use its digital tools to help them better engage with their health plan experience. More than 830 member accounts have been created and an additional 2,100+ members have registered for Virtual Care. More than 1,400 members have enrolled in the Capital BlueCross Loop and 2,400 in Blue365.

Save the Date – Holiday Luncheon: December 19, 2019 at Melt, Promenade Shoppes at Saucon Valley.





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.

Register Now for NAHPC's Annual Meeting: November 11-13, 2019



The 2019 Annual Forum of the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions will bring together more than 300 business coalitions, employers, and healthcare system stakeholders to discuss best practices and emerging trends in management of employee health and health benefits.

This year's topics include innovative approaches and strategies to wellbeing, population health, employee empowerment, special sessions on healthcare policy, and updates on the AHCA along with other emerging healthcare topics. If you are interested in attending, contact us at LVBCH@LVBCH.com.

Agenda

Action Briefs

Obesity



Bariatric Surgery



Health Policy In Transit

Bi-Partisan Legislation Moving Forward Focused on Healthcare Costs, Surprise Billing



Click on the pictures to read the brief.



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.

Leapfrog Releases Its First Surgical Volumes Report

The Leapfrog Group, an independent national health care watchdog organization, in July released [Safety In Numbers: The Leapfrog Group's Report on High-Risk Surgeries Performed at American Hospitals](#). The report analyzes eight high-risk procedures to determine which hospitals and surgeons perform enough of them to minimize the risk of patient harm or death, and whether hospitals actively monitor to assure that each surgery is necessary.



The report found that the vast majority of participating hospitals do not meet The Leapfrog Group's minimum hospital or surgeon volume standards for safety, nor do they have adequate policies in place to monitor for appropriateness. Rural hospitals are particularly challenged.

[News Release](#)

[Report](#)

INDUSTRY UPDATES

Read the Latest News from PA Health Care Cost Containment Council

Opioid Overdose Admissions Drop

The number of hospital admissions for opioid overdose in 2018 decreased almost 24% with 833 fewer admissions, according to a research brief PHC4 released in September.



Child Cancer Admissions Average 8 Per Day

More than 8,000 children with a cancer diagnosis were admitted to a Pennsylvania hospital from 2016-2018. This averages to eight admissions per day, according to a PHC4 research brief released in September



[News Release](#)

[Click on picture for Research Brief](#)

[News Release](#)

Rand Seeks Employers for Hospital Price Transparency Study

The Rand Corporation is currently recruiting employers to participate in the third round of its ongoing employer-led initiative to measure and publicly report the prices paid for hospital care. The study's last round (2) shed light on hospital price transparency in 25 states and RAND aims to expand the scope of the analysis to include self-funded employers. Participating self-funded employers in Round 3 of the study will have the option of receiving customized reports with hospital prices faced by their employee population.

[More Information](#)



Onsite Services Benefit Employers and Employees

“Since Americans spend about 44 hours at work each week,* providing onsite wellness services is a convenient way to reach employees and provide them with the necessary support to lead healthier lifestyles,” says **Erin Postel**, MPH, CHES®, Strategic Wellness Consultant, BeneFIT Corporate Wellness. These onsite services are available to local employers. *(US Bureau of Labor and Statistics)

Biometric Screenings and Health Fairs efficiently give employees their important numbers: blood pressure, body composition, cholesterol, and glucose. Participants receive guidance from certified health professionals on their results, and employers receive aggregate reporting to guide future wellness initiatives.

Health Coaching sessions, with a board-certified health coach, help employees achieve their well-being goals. Bringing a coach onsite builds rapport with participants and may encourage employees, who are hesitant to engage over the phone, to meet with a coach.

Weight Management provides employees with a solution that really works! Ninety-eight percent of participants see results. This eight-week program includes one year of health coaching for all program participants.

Educational Workshops offer a selection of topics based on a company’s needs, delivered at the workplace by a certified health expert. Available in 30-, 45-, or 60-minute presentations.

Contact BeneFIT Corporate Wellness today at 610-969-0176 or visit <https://www.populytics.com/benefit/onsite>.

Help your employees afford college



The biggest financial worry for 78% of families is the cost of college, according to a 2015 Gallup study. United Concordia Dental and SAGE Scholars, Inc. have partnered to help. United Concordia dental plans now include SAGE’s College Tuition Benefit®, a value-added feature that helps employees save money on college. Much like a frequent flier program, employees earn Tuition Rewards® points that can be redeemed for tuition discounts. Points are accepted at 400+ participating private colleges and universities – many ranked as “America’s Best Colleges” by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Employees earn 2,000 Tuition Rewards points every year they’re covered by United Concordia plans. One Tuition Rewards point equals \$1, so 2,000 points equals \$2,000 in discounts. Points can be used by eligible students in the policy holder’s family, including children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, stepchildren, godchildren, and adopted children.

The College Tuition Benefit is available to self-insured (ASO) and fully insured businesses as of January 1, 2020. United Concordia has created a toolkit to help employers promote Tuition Rewards to employees. To learn more, visit the employer page at UnitedConcordia.CollegeTuitionBenefit.com.

Learn about Our New Partner



Click on the picture above to read the brochure



Click on the picture above to read the wellness flyer

How Effective is Your Disease Management Program?

Scott Fair, USI Insurance Services



Do you know how much your disease management program has saved your company? If you are unable to answer this question, how do you know that your company's disease management strategy is successful? The following three questions can help CFOs and CHROs evaluate program effectiveness.

- 1) How much are we spending on disease management?
- 2) How does our vendor define engagement?
- 3) How does our vendor define success?

If you are unhappy with the answers, it may be time to consider a new strategy. A knowledgeable consultant can help you define your company's goals, implement a long-term strategic plan to manage future claims costs, and evaluate programs to identify those that support your objectives.

Disease Management Article

Slowing the Specialty Rx Freight Train: *Red Flags May Indicate Derailment*

John Adler, ELMC Rx



Many HR executives, welfare fund administrators, and benefit consultants have a healthy cynicism when it comes to pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) being a trusted financial steward of their Rx spend. A PBM could be executing its job exactly as contracted, but total Rx spend could still be ready to jump off the tracks.

The following provides some insight into system weaknesses in the specialty Rx prior authorization (PA) process and identifies some warning signals to look for.

- Reliance on algorithms not addressing unique patient complexities
- Verifying documentation through verbal statements or electronic checklists, eliminating the expertise of clinical pharmacists
- Use of pharmacy technicians with limited subject matter training to execute the PA process
- Failure to request new labs, updated medical records, or to research contraindications upon PA renewal.
- Lack of execution of appropriate genetic testing.

Challenges of Accurately Repricing PBM Claims: *De-Mystifying Repricing*

Benefits consultants review thousands of requests for proposal from pharmacy benefits managers (PBMs). The degree of sophistication and method of evaluation to verify each bidder's "savings" varies widely, from a simple spreadsheet analysis to the classic claims repricing. Focusing on the latter, helps verify savings.

The challenge of accurately estimating savings requires control of the following processes:

- 1) The initial claims request to the PBMs, including the guidance that should be provided to PBM repricing, what the rules are for, what can and cannot be done during repricing, especially as it relates to indicators and specialty drugs, as well as sequencing of claims to ensure all claims are accounted for and to verify exclusions.
- 2) The claims elements after the claims are received and loaded into the data warehouse for analysis. This includes accounting for all claims and performing a comparative analysis.

Specialty Rx Article

PBM Repricing Article

60 West Broad Street • Suite 306 • Bethlehem, PA 181018 • P: 610-317-0130

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

