



Care System Connection

News for providers participating in the Patient Choice program

Spring 2004

MEDICA ACQUIRES PATIENT CHOICE OPERATIONS

Recently, Patient Choice announced that its Minnesota/Dakota operations were acquired by Medica, Minnesota's largest HMO, largest PPO and leading non-profit and independent provider of health plans.

This new partnership and combined resources will create more product choices that empower consumers and reward providers through incentives for health care quality and value.

Operations

The Patient Choice Minnesota/Dakota program will continue operating with existing staff, led by Ann Robinow, as a business unit within Medica. Wausau Benefits, Corporate Benefit Services of America and MMSI will continue to administer the Patient Choice Minnesota/Dakota program.

Existing provider contracts will be honored and the operations of Medica and Patient Choice will be kept distinct from one another. There will be no stacking of contracts. Contracts with Patient Choice will be for Patient Choice products only.

Streamlined Credentialing

Medica has the highest accreditation status, *Excellent*, from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA®) for its Minnesota and North Dakota Medicaid HMO plans and commercial health plans.

Going forward, Patient Choice will utilize Medica's provider credentialing process. That means providers who are credentialed by Medica, are automatically credentialed for the Patient Choice program.

The turnaround time involved with Medica's credentialing process is approximately 14 days.

STAN KOCH & SONS SELECTS PATIENT CHOICE

We are pleased to announce that Stan Koch & Sons Trucking, Inc. (pronounced "cook") offered the Patient Choice Network to its 314 employees beginning April 1, 2004. The program will be administered by Wausau Benefits, Inc. Stan Koch & Sons Trucking is a family owned company founded in 1978 and a major carrier of consumer products nationwide. Its headquarters is located at 4200 Dahlberg Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55422-4802.

SPECIALTY GROUPS RESPONSE RATE IS UP 25% IN 2004

Accurate, valid provider data is key for efficient health plan administration. Each year, Patient Choice asks participating specialty groups to help us improve our information by validating their provider data. This year, we had a terrific response rate of more than 75 percent. That's an increase of 25 percent over 2003! We would like to extend a special *THANK YOU* to each of the specialty provider groups for their assistance in this project.

MARKET-WIDE CORNER

The Patient Choice program is now part of the unique health care options offered by Medica. As a result, Patient Choice is currently working to replace existing contracts with Patient Choice to re-establish participation with the Patient Choice Network under Medica beginning January 1, 2005.

WAUSAU BENEFITS LAUNCHES NEW CLAIM DOWNLOAD FEATURE

Wausau Benefits recently enhanced its "Provider" center available at www.wausaubenefits.com. The site now includes a feature that allows you to download claims. (*Continued on page 3.*)

Note: *Care System Connection* is provided to you as a participant in the Patient Choice program. Please distribute across your organization and sites.



AREA HOSPITALS MAKE GREAT STRIDES IN PATIENT SAFETY

Recognizing and rewarding Care Systems for quality initiatives and programs that improve patient care is a hallmark of the Patient Choice program. We accomplish this in part, by sharing information with consumers about Care System achievements with consumers, including information about how area hospitals fared on The Leapfrog Group Hospital Survey.

As you may know, The Leapfrog Group is a coalition of more than 150 organizations that provide health care benefits to more than 34 million individuals. The group launched a voluntary program aimed at mobilizing employer purchasing power to alert America's health industry that big leaps in patient safety and customer value will be recognized and rewarded.

Currently, The Leapfrog Group has identified three hospital safety measures that are the focus of its hospital survey. The measures include:

- **Computer Physician Order Entry (CPOE):** With CPOE systems, physicians enter medication orders via a computer linked to prescribing error prevention software. CPOE has been shown to reduce serious prescribing errors in hospitals by more than 50%.
- **Evidence-based Hospital Referral (EHR):** By referring patients with proven outcomes or extensive experience in a certain procedure or diagnosis research indicates that a patient's risk of dying could be reduced by more than 30 percent.

- **Intensive Care Unit Physician Staffing (IPS):** Staffing Intensive Care Units (ICU) with physicians who have credentials in critical care medicine at least eight hours a day has shown to reduce the risk of patients dying in the ICU by more than 10 percent.

By implementing the three Leapfrog measures, hospitals can make great strides to improve patient safety and reduce costs. In fact, according to information published by The Leapfrog Group, if urban and suburban hospitals implement the three safety measures, in addition to nearly 60,000 lives that could be saved, and more than half a million serious medication errors that could be prevented each year, approximately \$9.7 billion could be saved annually.

A large percentage of the hospitals in Minnesota have elected to participate in this voluntary safety program. Patient Choice recognizes the significant progress that several metro area hospitals, which participate in our network, have made toward implementing the Leapfrog safety measures. Their achievements are highlighted below.

Congratulations to these hospitals on their progress in this voluntary patient safety initiative!

CPOE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

100% Fully	75% - Good Progress	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairview Red Wing HealthServices • Minnesota Valley Memorial-LeSeur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin Medical Center • Fairview Southdale Hospital • Fairview University Med Center • Hennepin County Medical Center • Mayo Clinic–Rochester • Mayo Clinic-St. Mary's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mercy Hospital • Methodist Hospital • Northfield Hospital • Regions Hospital • Ridgeview Medical Center • Unity Hospital

EHR PROGRESS

EHR is measured on procedure, condition, process excellence and volume. It focuses on six identified high-risk procedures/conditions. These are the *leading* Patient Choice affiliated hospitals with an overall score of 100% in one or more of these six conditions/procedures:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Inc. • Fairview Southdale Hospital • Fairview University Medical Center • Mayo Clinic - St. Mary's • Mayo Clinic - Rochester Methodist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regions Hospital • St. Cloud Hospital • St. Luke's Hospital of Duluth • United Hospital |
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IPS IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

100% - Fully	50% - Good Early Stage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairview Southdale Hospital • Mayo Clinic–Rochester Methodist • Mayo Clinic–St. Mary’s • Methodist Hospital • Owatonna Hospital • United Hospitals, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbott Northwestern Hosp. Inc. • Fairview University Med Center • North Memorial Med Center • St. Cloud Hospital • St. John’s NE Comm. Hospital • St. Mary’s Medical Center-Duluth

The following Patient Choice affiliated hospitals are making exceptional progress in all three Leapfrog safety measures!

Hospital	Percentage of implementation progress on the three safety measures combined (CPOE+EHR+IPS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairview Southdale Hospital • Mayo Clinic – St. Mary’s Hospital • Mayo Clinic-Rochester Methodist Hospital 	> 80%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodist Hospital • United Hospitals, Inc. 	> 70%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Inc. • Fairview University Medical Center 	> 60%

You can access The Leapfrog Group hospital survey results at www.leapfrog.org or by linking to it from www.patientchoicehealthcare.com. For information about the return on investment to *both* providers and purchasers, see the *Leapfrog Fact Sheet* (<http://www.leapfroggroup.org/FactSheets.htm>).

Note: The Avera McKennan and Sioux Valley Hospitals in Sioux Falls, South Dakota participate in the Patient Choice Network and are involved with the National Quality of Care Program and measures implemented in July of 2003 by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). See www.cms.hhs.gov/quality/hospital for more information. Also of interest, Avera McKennan Hospital responds with its disaster plan. See www.hcpro.com/content/39139.cfm.

WAUSAU BENEFITS LAUNCHES NEW CLAIM DOWNLOAD FEATURE *(Continued from page 1)*

Wausau Benefits’ new claim download feature is easy to use and takes just a few minutes. Follow these three steps to download claims and export to a program such as Microsoft Excel.

1. Logon to www.wausaubenefits.com and register and/or login to the “Providers” center.
2. Click on “Claim Inquiry”
3. Perform your search and download the results by clicking the “Download” link and selecting your preferred format

If you have questions or difficulty registering or using Wausau Benefits online services, please contact Technical Support, toll-free at 1-866-922-8266, or refer to the online tutorial guides available on the Wausau Benefits site.

Internet Explorer, version 4.0 or higher is the recommended browser.