



By Way of Introduction...

Welcome to PCC Pulse, a new publication from the Robert Wood Johnson Health Network's Physician Coordinating Council (PCC). This quarterly newsletter is being distributed to all physicians affiliated with Network member hospitals to keep you up to date on timely clinical, management, research and education topics. The PCC believes that sharing information, ideas and best practices is the best way to promote ongoing improvements in health care delivery. For example, through sharing data and strategies on reducing patient



John Middleton, M.D.

mortality and complication rates at PCC meetings, Network hospitals continue to achieve significant improvements in patient clinical outcomes.

PCC members who represent each member hospital's physician leadership, extend an invitation to every Network physician to learn about these issues through this newsletter.

PCC Pulse will contain topics of importance to physicians, like continuing medical education, emerging healthcare and hospital trends, as well as reports on patient outcomes, patient safety and patient satisfaction. The newsletter may also contain articles that focus on practice management issues of broad interest to physicians. An article on Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements (MEWAs) contained in this issue serves to illustrate that area.

We hope you will like the first issue of PCC Pulse. You can tell us what you think by contacting the Network office with recommendations, or to suggest topics you'd like to read about in future issues. We look forward to hearing from you!

John Middleton, M.D.
Benjamin Weinstein, M.D.

Network MEWA Plan Can Save Your Practice Thousands on Health Insurance Costs

Are you a sole practitioner looking for ways to reduce the cost of your office's health benefits plan? Consider enrolling in a Multiple Employer Welfare Act (MEWA) insurance plan. A MEWA plan can help sole practitioners save thousands of dollars annually on health insurance costs.

On July 1, 2003 the Robert Wood Johnson Health Network (RWJHN) established a MEWA insurance plan under the provision of a 2001-enacted New Jersey law that authorized the creation of MEWAs for businesses with a common employee base (i.e., attorneys, accountants, auto dealerships, etc.). Although 15 states in the nation have similar laws, MEWA partnerships between a hospital network and its affiliated hospitals are still rare.

Physicians affiliated with a RWJHN member hospital may enroll in the Association of Participating Physicians (APP) and become eligible to enroll his or her practice in the MEWA program. All physicians that contract with Qualcare and are members of Robert Wood Johnson Health Network member hospitals' medical staffs are in the provider network.

The MEWA plan was developed as a trust and partnership arrangement between the RWJHN, the APP and QualCare of Piscataway, N.J., the program's administrator. (QualCare currently services approximately 500,000 customers statewide). According to Andrew Greene, RWJHN's Chief Executive Officer, 105 physician practices representing approximately 400 covered lives have already signed up for the plan.

Under the plan's arrangement, affiliated physicians can enroll their practice's full-time employees and their family members in the Network's open access, point-of-service health insurance plan. MEWA plan participants receive in-network healthcare services through RWJHN-affiliated physicians and hospital members. Medical care received by plan participants outside of the network is covered at 70% of allowable charges.

Annual savings can be significant. For example, one newly enrolled physician previously spent \$30,000 per year for a conventional health insurance plan. RWJHN's MEWA arrangement saved him \$6,000 annually—a 20% savings in health insurance costs.

For more information on the MEWA health benefits plan, contact Peg Douglas at peg.douglas@rwjuh.edu or at 732-418-8055.



Benjamin Weinstein, M.D.

PCC Pulse is published quarterly by the Robert Wood Johnson Health Network's Physicians Coordinating Council.

The Physician's Coordinating Council

Established in 1995, the RWJ Health Network is a voluntary, contractual affiliation of like-minded healthcare organizations based on partnership, not ownership. Its Board of Directors established governing councils to develop and implement programs to achieve Network strategic goals. The Physician Coordinating Council (PCC) was formed to lead the Network's Clinical Integration Program, a collaborative, systematic approach of clinical outcome and process measurement, reporting and communication.

The PCC is a physician-led committee that sets the Robert Wood Johnson Health Network apart from other health systems in the state and in the nation.

Members include:

- the Chief Medical Officer of each Network member hospital;
- an invited community physician from each hospital;
- a RWJ Medical School representative
- a performance improvement specialist from each hospital
- the Network's Chief Executive Officer, and
- its Clinical Integration Analyst

The PCC determines areas of study and establishes performance benchmarks, analyzes trends, and communicates best practices, as well as clinical integration initiatives and outcomes, within member organizations. The PCC also reviews and consults on corrective action plan strategies, recommends and conducts research studies and determines educational programming for its member hospitals' healthcare professionals. Key information is shared among the Network's hospital members via their chief medical officers.

Members of the Council are champions for quality care and agents for change in their hospitals. The Council meets monthly to discuss current medical and administrative issues, as well as "hot topics" in medicine, patient care and hospital policy. PCC members recommend improvement strategies and member hospitals incorporate the recommendations in ways that "fit" their hospital culture. Clinical activities, educational programming and administrative decision-making develop from the PCC's focus on achieving outstanding patient outcomes.

In the final analysis, the Physicians Coordinating Council is one of the driving forces behind positive change and improvement among the Network's member hospitals.

Editor's Note: Questions about the PCC can be directed to your hospital's Chief Medical Officer.

The Physician Coordinating Council is comprised of the medical leadership of the Robert Wood Johnson Health Network members which include:

- Bayshore Community Health Services, Inc.
- CentraState Healthcare System
- Children's Specialized Hospital
- Raritan Bay Medical Center (Perth Amboy and Old Bridge)
- Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (New Brunswick, Hamilton, and Rahway)
- UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (New Brunswick)
- Eric B. Chandler Health Center
- Henry J. Austin Health Center
- Plainfield Health Center
- VNA Community Health Center
- Presbyterian Homes & Services, Inc.

It is the only healthcare network in New Jersey to include a medical school among its partners.

Please direct questions you have on any information contained in this newsletter to the chief medical officer of a RWJHN member hospital, or contact the Network's Clinical Integration Analyst, Lois Dornan, directly at lois.dornan@rwjuh.edu.