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TOP PERFORMING NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PHYSICIAN ORGANIZATIONS IDENTIFIED BY INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATION (IHA)

Selection Based on Performance in Clinical Quality, Patient Satisfaction and use of Information Technology

OAKLAND, Calif., Oct. 6 – The Integrated Healthcare Association (IHA) has identified Northern and Southern California’s top performing physician organizations, based on their provision of recommended care, patient satisfaction, and investment in information technologies (IT) that support quality care.

The top 10 rated physician groups in Northern California are:

- *East Bay Area:* Alta Bates Medical Group; Hill Physicians Medical Group, East Bay; Hill Physicians Medical Group, Solano; John Muir/Mt. Diablo Health Network.
- *Sacramento:* Sutter Medical Group; Sutter West Medical Group; UC Davis Health System.
- *San Francisco and South Bay Area:* Camino Medical Group; Mills-Peninsula Medical Group; Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Palo Alto Division.

The top 10 rated physician groups in Southern California are:

- *Los Angeles:* Cedars Sinai Health Associates; HealthCare Partners Medical Group; Pioneer Medical Group, Inc.; Cedars Sinai Medical Group; UCLA Medical Group.
- *Orange County:* Edinger Medical Group; Greater Newport Physicians Medical Group
- *San Diego:* Scripps Mercy Medical Group; Sharp Mission Park Medical Group; Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Centers.

"These groups, operating in an organized and integrated model, have distinguished themselves and raised the bar for other physician practices in California. By investing in information technologies that improve care and physician decision-making, they are better able to deliver preventive and chronic care services to their patients, who are clearly satisfied with the care they are receiving," said Don Crane, President and CEO of the California Association of Physician Groups.

The best performing medical groups were selected from among 225 participating in the Pay for Performance (P4P) program. (Last July, IHA released its second complete annual statewide P4P program report covering the performance of over 35,000 physicians in these California physician organizations.)

To earn selection, a physician group had to demonstrate that it met criteria in three categories of performance measurement: clinical, patient experience and the use of information technology. All top performing groups received the maximum rating for qualifying IT activities: using clinical data to manage patient populations, and using technology to support physician decision-making during patient interactions.

"These physician groups have worked hard to earn this distinction. Linking financial incentives to improve healthcare measures makes a strong business case for quality improvement. Blue Cross of California will continue to support the IHA P4P program," said Michael Belman, MD, Medical Director, Quality Management, Blue Cross of California.

The P4P program examines physician group performance according to 14 measures of clinically recommended preventive care -- such as breast cancer and cholesterol screening -- and chronic care, for such conditions as asthma and diabetes. Patient satisfaction is determined through a mailed survey that asks: how well doctors communicate, the timeliness of care and service, access to specialists, and overall ratings of the doctor and care experience.

"Several recent studies, including the Institute of Medicine's *Fostering Rapid Advances in Health*, have shown that adoption of IT systems for purposes such as building patient

registries for at-risk or chronically ill patients and using electronic decision support systems at the point of care can lead to substantial improvements in the quality of care,” said Tom Williams, executive director of IHA. “This has proven to be the case in IHA’s P4P program. Medical groups that received full credit on the IT measures had average clinical scores that were nine percentage points higher than medical groups that showed no evidence of IT adoption.”

Medical groups evaluated by IHA contract with the seven participating P4P health plans: Aetna, Blue Cross of California, Blue Shield of California, CIGNA Healthcare of California, Heath Net (California), and PacifiCare (California), and Western Health Advantage. In 2004, these plans -- covering 6.2 million health plan enrollees -- paid out combined incentive payments of almost \$40 million to physician groups that reached P4P quality targets. P4P data is collected and analyzed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), a Washington non-profit dedicated to improving health care quality.

The P4P measures – and others – are used by the Office of the Patient Advocate to rate California medical groups. The ratings are available at www.opa.ca.gov.

IHA (www.iha.org) is a statewide collaborative of California health plans, medical groups, and health care systems, plus academic, consumer, purchaser, pharmaceutical and new technology representatives. IHA promotes quality improvement, accountability, and affordability for the benefit of all California consumers through special projects, policy innovation and education

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