

## Quincy and Hannibal area Employers Work to Improve Health and Lower Health Care Costs for People with Diabetes

**Quincy – June 2007** – The cost of diabetes in the U.S. has been estimated at \$132 billion in direct health care expenditures and lost productivity, and people with diabetes incur health care costs that are almost 2.5 times higher than people without diabetes. To combat these staggering statistics and help people with diabetes better manage their health, the non-profit Tri-State Health Care Coalition on Health (TSHCC) has established *Controlling Your Health for Life: Patient Self-Management Program for Diabetes*. *This Program creates incentives to actively engage patients to manage their diabetes.*

The Program, *Controlling Your Health For Life: Patient Self-Management Program for Diabetes* is offered through the Tri-State Health Care Coalition (TSHCC) and is conducted by the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) Foundation, in cooperation with the Illinois Pharmacist Association (IPhA), with support from Pfizer, Inc.

The lack of medication adherence has been identified as a major barrier to improving the health of people with diabetes. Since financial barriers are a leading source of poor medication adherence, employees of participating member companies will benefit from incentives offered by their employers. The incentives for participants will focus on improving medication adherence by waiving or lowering co-pays for diabetic medication and test supplies. Another incentive, and key component of the program, is for the patient to meet regularly with a pharmacist coach, specially trained in diabetes education and monitoring.

The City of Hannibal, Gardner Denver, Inc., Knapheide Manufacturing, Inc., Mercantile Bank, Niemann Foods, Quincy Compressor, Quincy Medical Group and Quincy Public Schools are among the first TSHCC members to offer enrollment in the Quincy/Hannibal program to their covered employees and dependents.

“We are looking for ways to support our employees who want to improve their health,” said Barb Anderson, supervisor health and welfare plans for Gardner Denver. “We believe *Controlling Your Health For Life* provides people with diabetes valuable tools and support to actively manage their condition and offers incentives for them to take action.”

*Controlling Your Health For Life* is modeled after several successful APhA Foundation programs, including the Asheville Project in North Carolina, a diabetes management program proven to improve overall health, reduce absenteeism, shorten hospital stays and reduce health care costs since it was started in 1997.

Regularly scheduled in-person meetings between participants and their pharmacist coach in collaboration with physicians and diabetes educators are essential to the effectiveness of *Controlling Your Health For Life*. Specially trained in diabetes education and monitoring, the pharmacists check key diabetes indicators and educate participants.

The objective of the meetings is to help people understand how to track their condition and encourage adherence to their medication, fitness and treatment regimens. As participants learn how to better manage diabetes, their health improves, making it possible to minimize unnecessary and costly physician and emergency room visits and surgeries.

“The pharmacist’s role is to be an educator and motivator, ensuring the patient follows their physician’s orders and understands how to manage and monitor their diabetes and medications,” said TSHCC Executive Director, Bev Rossmiller. “Studies have shown that with the treatment, education and motivation provided by this program, people can dramatically improve their health while positively impacting employer health care costs.”

The pharmacist coach network in the Quincy and Hannibal areas is being coordinated and trained by the Illinois Pharmacists Association. Currently, eight local pharmacists are participating in the program. More pharmacists will be trained as the program grows. The pharmacist coaches will see participants at a location convenient to the participant.

Chicago-based Emmi Solutions, LLC is providing an online education module about diabetes to the pharmacist coaches to support the educational component of the program through EmmiHealth™, a multimedia, Web-based program that provides people with information about managing a chronic condition. The Emmi series is designed to increase patient compliance and reinforce healthy behaviors.

The Tri-State Health Care Coalition program is available to all interested (self-insured) employers. In the future, TSHCC's *Controlling Your Health For Life* will be expanded to other critical health care needs such as cardiovascular disease, asthma and depression.

#### **About the Tri-State Health Care Coalition (www.TSHCC.com)**

The Quincy, IL based, Tri-State Health Care Coalition (TSHCC) was founded in 1991 by a group area employers to help all types of purchasers – employers and their employees – obtain more value from their health care benefit dollars and improve the health status of their constituents. Today, TSHCC is a leading coalition of private and public employers. TSHCC's 55+ members represent over 25,000 covered lives. Organized as a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation, TSHCC offers employers a variety of health benefit educational seminars, networking opportunities, quality and community initiatives, demonstration projects and group purchasing programs. TSHCC is a member of the National Business Coalition on Health.

#### **Diabetes in the United States**

According to the American Diabetes Association, every 21 seconds another American is diagnosed with diabetes, the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. More than 20 million children and adults (7% of the U.S. population) have diabetes, but only 15 million have been diagnosed.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 63 percent – almost two thirds – of people diagnosed with diabetes are not achieving control of the disease. Each year, 200,000 people die of complications from diabetes; and an additional 100,000 are affected by blindness, kidney failure, heart disease and problems of the lower extremities, including amputations.

#### **About the APhA Foundation (www.aphafoundation.org)**

The APhA Foundation, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is a non-profit organization affiliated with the American Pharmacists Association, the national professional society of pharmacists in the United States. The APhA Foundation has expertise in designing programs that seek to create a new medication use system in the United States where patients, pharmacists, physicians and other health care providers collaborate to dramatically improve the cost and quality of consumer health outcomes through the safe and effective use of medications.

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