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Contact: HHS Press Office  
(202) 690-6343

## **HHS Secretary Awards Health Leaders with Special Distinction for Improving Quality and Value of Health Care**

Today, HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt recognized 14 communities with a special federal distinction for their strong commitment to improving quality and value in health care.

The Secretary designated these partnerships of providers, employers, insurers, and consumers as the country's first Chartered Value Exchanges (CVE) for their work to implement cutting-edge, collaborative methods to transform health care at the local level.

"These pioneers are at the forefront of a nationwide movement to transform our current health care sector into a patient-focused marketplace," Secretary Leavitt said. "Together we are building the foundation of a transparent system that empowers consumers to seek high-quality health care at competitive prices."

As Chartered Value Exchanges, communities will have access to information from Medicare that gauges the quality of care physicians provide to patients. These performance measurement results can be combined with similar private-sector data to produce a comprehensive consumer guide on the quality of care available. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will begin providing physician-group level performance information by the summer of 2008.

In addition, these communities will join a nationwide Learning Network sponsored by HHS' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. This network will provide peer-to-peer learning experiences through facilitated meetings, both face-to-face and on the Web. Access to HHS experts and new tools, including an ongoing private Web-based knowledge management system, are added benefits of CVE status.

Over the last year, HHS has designated more than 100 Community Leaders that are encouraging the growth of community-based, multi-stakeholder collaboratives working to drive health care reform. These groups were the first eligible to apply for CVE status. After an extensive peer-review process of 38 applications, 14 collaboratives in a dozen states have been selected to receive charters from Secretary Leavitt. Community Leaders interested in becoming Chartered Value Exchanges will have an opportunity to apply later this spring.

CVEs represent one of a number of initiatives undertaken by HHS to implement a bold vision for health care reform built on four cornerstones. These include: advancing interoperable health information technology; measuring and publishing quality information to enable consumers to make better decisions about their care; measuring and publishing price information to give consumers information they need to make decisions on purchasing health care; and promoting incentives for quality and efficiency of care.

“Local public-private collaboration is essential to the success of our efforts,” Secretary Leavitt noted. “While measures and standards of quality and efficiency must continue to be developed nationally, health care is actually delivered locally. It is provided in a diverse range of environments that differ in their history, resources, populations served, market characteristics, and medical cultures. Because of this diversity, the most effective steps to achieving lasting improvements in health care require a critical mass of support from community stakeholders investing their time and resources toward shared, meaningful, actionable goals.”

The Chartered Value Exchanges are:

- Wisconsin Healthcare Value Exchange, Madison, Wis.
- Healthy Memphis Common Table, Germantown, Tenn.
- Greater Detroit Area Health Council, Detroit, Mich.
- Niagara Health Quality Coalition, Williamsville, N.Y.
- Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation, Portland, Ore.
- Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Puget Sound Health Alliance, Seattle, Wash.
- Utah Partnership for Value-driven Health Care, Salt Lake City, Utah
- Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum, Baton Rouge, La.
- Maine Chartered Value Exchange Alliance, Scarborough, Maine
- Minnesota Healthcare Value Exchange, St. Paul, Minn.
- Massachusetts Chartered Value Exchange, Watertown, Mass.
- Alliance for Health, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- New York Quality Alliance, Albany, N.Y.

For more information, please visit <http://www.hhs.gov/valuedriven>.

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