MedChi
The Maryland State Medical Society

MEDCHI CREATES ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANIZATIONS TO SUPPORT PHYSICIANS AND THEIR PATIENTS

BALTIMORE, July 9, 2012 – MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, announced today that it is participating in the Medicare Shared Savings Program to provide better care to patients while reducing costs. Along with partners from Health Prime International, a health care management and information technology firm located in National Harbor, Maryland, MedChi is starting three Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs).

The Affordable Care Act established ACOs to integrate care delivery across multiple health care providers. The goal of this and other Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) initiatives is to achieve a three-part aim of better care for individuals, better health for populations, and lower costs. "MedChi is proud to be a leader in the effort to enhance care and control costs," said Harry Ajrawat, MD, President of MedChi. "Physicians throughout the state will gain freedom to work directly with their patients to keep them healthy."

Under this new program, groups of health care providers such as physicians, nursing homes, and home health agencies can work together to care for Medicare patients. Each ACO strives to achieve the three part goal of CMS: better population health, better individual outcomes, and lower costs. In return for the increased accountability, Medicare will share a portion of the savings generated with the ACO – and its participating providers.

Gene Ransom, CEO of MedChi, is optimistic about this new program. "The final regulations eliminate physician downside risk, and require ACOs to be led by the physicians within the ACO who are directly providing care," he said. "This is an essential part of the program and guarantees that patient care remains paramount."

Over the coming weeks and months, physicians within each ACO will work together to design patient-centered health care programs. From the patient perspective, there will be better integration of care between their primary care physician, specialists, and hospitals. A robust health IT infrastructure will allow for the real-time processing of information, which will reduce the likelihood of unnecessary testing. Care managers will work directly with Medicare beneficiaries to schedule appointment dates, manage medications, and answer health care questions around the clock.

"Congratulations to MedChi and its partners on their selection as Accountable Care Organizations," said Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown, who leads the O'Malley-Brown Administration's efforts to implement the Affordable Care Act. "Today's announcement is another example of how the Affordable Care Act is helping advance our efforts in Maryland to encourage more coordination of care among providers by offering incentives that reward healthier outcomes. Accountable Care Organizations, like our Patient Centered Medical Home Program, are a great example of the kind of innovative tools that will not only improve patient care and outcomes, but bend the curve of rising health care costs."

The direction of health care is changing, and physicians and their patients must be at the forefront. MedChi, partner organizations, and most importantly, physicians, will continue to provide essential leadership to ensure that Marylanders receive the high quality of care they deserve.

About MedChi
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.

About MedChi Network Services
MedChi Network Services is a division of MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society. The mission is to help physicians collaborate to enhance patient care and advance the private practice of medicine. MedChi Network Services is an accredited state-designated management services organization and leader in the field of health information technology.

About Health Prime International
Health Prime International (HPI) is a health care services and technology company headquartered in National Harbor, Maryland.   HPI empowers health care professionals by providing expertise in optimizing workflows and integrating technology, enabling them to focus on delivering higher quality, patient-centered care. HPI offers a complete suite of support services to health care practices including revenue cycle management, electronic health records, transcription, contact center, coding & compliance, payer contract analysis, comprehensive practice management and consulting.