

CONCIERGE DELIVERS PERSONAL TOUCH AT ALASKA REGIONAL HOSPITAL

In her new role as “healthcare concierge,” Ruth Townsend, MS, delivers one-on-one assistance to participants of Coalition member health plans when they receive services at Alaska Regional Hospital. Whenever a participant from a Coalition member health plan is admitted to the hospital as an inpatient, she visits the patient to make sure he or she understands - and receives - the services they need.

“Our terrific nursing staff take care of all of their needs, but I can field questions when the



plan participant or their family needs an immediate answer,” she explains. “For example,

I can help alleviate a patient’s and their family’s anxiety if they have questions or concerns regarding processes or procedures, or upon discharge that haven’t yet been addressed. I also connect them with their case manager and resources they may need as an outpatient.”

Townsend also is ARH’s director of Health and Well-Being Solutions, responsible for producing and promoting seminars and patient education materials that help people become better

health care consumers.

“I encourage all Coalition member plans in Alaska to sign up to receive online flyers, so they can publicize these events to their plan participants. They are free, informative and fun,” Townsend adds.

Topics change monthly and range from heart health to diabetes to nutrition. In September, the focus is on robotic surgery — including live demonstrations. There’s also a monthly “Talk & Walk” on the trail at Goose Lake.

All seminars are free to Coalition member plans. To receive email flyers announcing these activities, contact Ruth at Ruth.Townsend@HCAHealthcare.com. □

FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ALASKA HEALTHCARE AUTHORITY (FOR NOW)

1 THE ALASKA HEALTHCARE AUTHORITY (HCA) IS NOT A REALITY . . . YET. Three consulting firms have determined that an HCA is feasible. Now, State administrators are busy identifying the “necessary and sufficient conditions” to implement an HCA and whether that is the best way to deliver value to public employees and retirees and employers, and to enable health care system reform.

2 BE PREPARED FOR MANDATORY PARTICIPATION. PRM Consulting Group, one of the firms tasked with studying the feasibility of an HCA, advised, “Unless all entities are required to participate in the HCA upon the expiration of the current collective bargaining

agreement, the likelihood of success in achieving the goals of improved cost-effectiveness is minimal.”

3 AN HCA AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING DO NOT PLAY WELL TOGETHER. Collective bargaining focuses on wages and benefits. If benefit levels and contribution rates are mandated by the HCA, that will put heavy pressure on wages, even if the actual cost of the plans stays the same or increases.

4 AN HCA TAKES AWAY LOCAL CONTROL, ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY. Local organizations like the members of our Coalition already deliver these

services efficiently and effectively. An HCA will not be able to communicate as directly with consumers — an essential element in encouraging the wise use of benefits. Finally, any cost savings achieved would accrue to the HCA, not to the employee’s union trust or the employer, much less the employees.

5 AN HCA WILL BE OPEN TO POLITICAL PRESSURE. An HCA would be governed by independent boards whose members would be appointed by...politicians. Because politicians are averse to voter disappointment, state agencies tend to avoid risk and resist the innovation needed to improve health care delivery. □

PHC QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

September 27, 2018

November 14, 2018

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS (IFEBP) 64TH ANNUAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS CONFERENCE

October 14 – 17, 2018

New Orleans, LA

Save The Date:

Pacific Health Coalition / National CooperativeRx Reception

The Pacific Health Coalition and National CooperativeRx invite you to join us for a viewing of the exhibits and reception at The National WWII Museum during the IFEBP Conference.

Monday, October 15
5:00p.m. – 7:00p.m.

Enjoy complimentary hors d'oeuvres, drinks and great company!

The WWII Museum is about six blocks from the Convention Center. Please enter through the Campaigns of Courage Pavilion from Andrew Higgins Blvd.

Attendance is limited, so be sure to RSVP here: <http://www.nationalcooperativerx.com/event/ifebp-nola/>

Alaska Regional Hospital Savings Add Up

Member plans that use the Coalition's PPO arrangement with Alaska Regional Hospital saw significant savings in the first quarter of 2018:

	Percentage Discount	Dollar Savings
Outpatient Services	63%	\$9,663,000
Inpatient Services	66%	\$8,335,000
Total Savings	64%	\$17,998,000



New Member Spotlight:



UNITE HERE HEALTH ALASKA

When the Alaska Hotel, Restaurant & Camp Employee Health & Welfare Trust became part of UNITE HERE HEALTH (UHH), it created a connection between the Coalition and the Culinary Health Fund in Las Vegas, Nevada, one of UHH's nine offices.

UNITE HERE HEALTH, based in Aurora, Illinois, is a multi-state Taft-Hartley fund serving union workers in the hospitality, food service and gaming industries. Nationwide, it represents more than 220,000 members, to whom it offers more than 30 customized health plans.

"We're very excited to be working with the Coalition on behalf of the approximately 600 members of the former Alaska Trust Fund and their families," said Denise Childress, director, Hospitality, Benefits and Plan Compliance for the Culinary Health Fund. "Clearly, their interests align with those of our 55,000 members here in Nevada, and we support organizations like the Coalition."

Childress and members of the Alaska plan met in the spring with Coalition leaders and providers in

Anchorage. "It was impressive to be welcomed by the CEO of Alaska Regional Hospital. The caring approach at the hospital and from other providers was obvious in our visits."

UNITE HERE HEALTH is evaluating which additional Coalition services would best serve the Alaska members. The goal, she says, is to put the members' needs first and to offer great benefits at a good rate. "In addition, we hope to find other ways to partner with the Coalition as part of any western state strategies and explore if UHH members in other states might benefit from this great Coalition."

Coalitions, she adds, play an important role for smaller plans "that may not have the bargaining power to drive good deals. The Pacific Health Coalition has the numbers and the know-how to negotiate strong contracts and good rates. Beyond that, it has the connections and determination to be active in the legislature, protecting health care services for all Alaskans," Childress concluded.

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READ ABOUT ALASKA REGIONAL HOSPITAL'S CONCIERGE, RUTH TOWNSEND, P.2.

Since 1994, the Pacific Health Coalition (aka HCCMCA) has been helping member health plans control health care costs by negotiating better pricing on health benefits and services than these same plans could achieve on their own. Current member health plans include 27 headquartered in Alaska and 19 headquartered in the Pacific Northwest.

COALITION WELCOMES PAT SHIER, ALASKA MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATIVE

As Pat Shier, the Coalition's new Alaska membership representative, sees it, "while Alaska covers a lot of territory, in terms of population and relationships, it is a lot like a small town. It's powered by creative people who see Alaska as a place where they can make a big difference."

In his 30-year career in the public sector, Pat served on the ASEA Executive Board and was a staff member on the Alaska Retirement Management Board. He was director of the Alaska Division of Retirement and Benefits and vice chancellor, CIO/CBO, University

of Alaska Anchorage. Whether working on the labor or the management side of the table, he honed an approach that relies on "seeing the value of the people who do and consume the work product, and being open and transparent in all of your dealings."

Pat's first job will be getting to know PHC's roster of Alaska-based member plans, and helping them fully understand and benefit from the Coalition's range of services.



"The Coalition works because it is member-led and efficient. It has the track record to prove it is a better model, and that is why I'm so excited to be involved."

*- Pat Shier, Alaska Membership Representative,
the Pacific Health Coalition*

He also sees it as his job to "translate complex health care issues into useful, actionable terms." The proposed Alaska Healthcare Authority is one of those issues. "The Coalition works because it is member-led and efficient. It has the track record to prove it is a better model, and that is why I'm so excited to be involved," he said. □