

Keeping Health Care Affordable For Workers And Their Families

GENEVA WOODS BIRTHING CENTER DELIVERS BABIES AND DISCOUNTS TO HCCMCA MEMBER PLANS BY DESIGN

Now, women wanting a more natural birth experience can find it, thanks to the newest service provider working with HCCMCA.

At the Geneva Woods Birth Center, trained midwives deliver babies into the world in a natural, caring environment and provide prenatal care focused on shared decision-making with the parents-to-be. It is the only nationally accredited birthing center in Anchorage.

Because the center sees pregnancy as “a major life step,” not “a temporary medical condition,” spouses, partners and family members are encouraged to participate throughout the prenatal and birth experience.

In a medical setting, interventions like continuous fetal monitoring, IVs, episiotomies and induced labor are routine. At Geneva Woods Birthing Center, they are the exception. Of course, the center has a close relationship with an obstetrician who is available 24/7 in case of complications.

The HCCMCA's contracted rate with Geneva



Woods is 20 to 35% less than a typical, vaginal birth in a hospital without complications and with a normal length of stay.

In addition, Geneva Woods offers birthing alternatives not available in most hospital settings. For example, there have been more than 200 “water” births in either the tub or

shower, which also are available during labor.

The 11 members of the staff include certified nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, registered and licensed practical nurses and a board-certified lactation consultant. ■



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POWER OF COLLECTIVE PURCHASING AND COLLABORATION: JUNE 20TH MEETING RECAP

"Strength in numbers" sums up the message delivered at the June 20th meeting of the National Labor Alliance of Health Care Coalitions (NLAHCC) at the Teamsters Building in Tukwila, Washington.

Randy Scott started the day off with an overview of "Taft-Hartley Trusts Working Together for Savings, Efficiency, and Quality." He listed several factors driving the formation of coalitions: increasing provider and administrative costs, lack of provider accountability, decreasing choice due to provider consolidation and the health care consumers' lack of voice over problems in the system.

Coalitions, Scott continued, provide concrete advantages. They are an opportunity for funds to share their experiences and learn from each other, to compare data and programs, to support local market share, and of course, to enhance purchasing power.

Four presenters, including HCCMCA Executive Director Fred Brown, gave detailed overviews of how coalitions work across the country. For example, the Midwest Employee

Benefit Funds Coalition has 41 member funds with 110,000 families and more than 300,000 covered lives. Beyond the basics, it offers its members services such as meetings with industry leaders, user groups with providers, and education on topics like health care fraud, according to presenter Kristina Gaughan, secretary, Midwest Employee Benefit Funds Coalition.

NLAHCC President Robert Tessier, also executive director of the Connecticut Coalition of Taft-Hartley Health Funds, spoke about recent and emerging initiatives. He cited the expansion of health fairs and wellness/educational summits, long-term care coverage and discounts for respiratory services and medical supplies as examples.

"What I heard at the meeting reinforced the advantages of health and welfare trusts becoming involved with collective purchasing efforts," said Wes Yoder, a consultant with the Seattle employee benefit consulting firm Rael & Letson. "Coalitions provide

opportunities, today and in the future, to save money and improve services."

COALITIONS AND THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

Doug Rubbelke, the NLAHCC's executive director, addressed the emerging topic of medical stop-loss insurance. This new program is intended to help plans deal with increased plan limits and mitigate the effects of the federal Affordable Care Act. Among other things, it will give participating plans the ability to lock in rates, obtain discounts and manage claims from "dollar one."

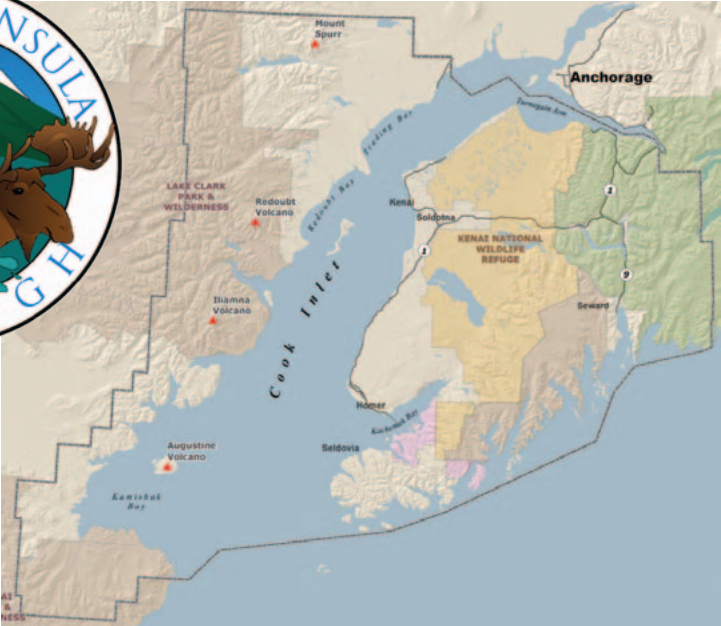
Looking to the future of health care, Greg Horstman, CEO of National CooperativeRx, said, "As long as there are self-funding plan sponsors, there will be an ongoing need and significant opportunities for effective, cutting-edge, member-centric coalitions. The dynamic health care landscape and the increasingly complex role pharmacy benefits play offer abundant opportunity to expand the collective purchasing clout of coalitions and to deliver an added level of service to their members." ■



Strength in Numbers



HCCMCA WELCOMES KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH



"Good people, good schools, good weather," is how Mark Dixon describes Alaska's Kenai Peninsula Borough. And the Health & Welfare Trust for the borough's 305 municipal employees is now a member in good standing of the HCCMCA.

Dixon, the borough's General Services director, first learned about HCCMCA through the borough's employee benefits consultant, Parker, Smith & Feek. He then talked with other HCCMCA members before recommending membership. "The Kenai School District has gotten a lot of benefit from membership, in particular in terms of greater bargaining power," he said.

The cost discounts, particularly through preferred provider organizations and the opportunities to deliver more value to plan members, are particularly attractive. "We hope membership in HCCMCA will help us reduce health care costs, while offering additional services to our employees," Dixon said.

One example is the hearing health care program offered through EPIC. "We don't offer that coverage now, and it is something people could really benefit from," said

Human Resources Specialist Chris Anderson. She and Dixon also expect people to make good use of the Health Fairs, where employees will be able to get screening and other tests at a lower cost than in their doctor's office, as well as educational opportunities.

The HCCMCA's willingness to consider expanding its preferred provider network in the Kenai area convinced Dixon of its commitment to meeting the needs of member plans. And even with an expanded local network, Anderson notes that, "Seattle has always been a natural stopping-off place for Alaskans. People will be happy to know they can go there for second opinions and services not available locally."

The Kenai Peninsula Borough was created in 1961. Its 25,600 square miles are divided by the Cook Inlet. Oil and gas, commercial fishing, tourism and an emerging timber industry are among the borough's mainstays. It also offers a range of recreational activities, from hiking and hunting, to fishing. ■

CALENDAR

2012 HEALTH FAIRS

- Sept. 22 Juneau
Centennial Hall, 101 Egan Dr.
- Sept. 29 & 30 Fairbanks
Carlson Center,
2010 Second Ave.
- Sept. 29 Tri-Cities
Local 598 Hall, 1328 Rd. 28, Pasco
- Oct. 6 Soldotna
Central Peninsula Hospital,
250 Hospital Place
- Oct. 6 Anchorage
Alaska Regional Hospital,
2801 DeBarr Road
- Oct. 6 Spokane
Red Lion, W. 303 North River Dr.
- Oct. 13 Mat-Su
Mat-Su Regional Medical Center,
2500 S. Woodworth Loop, Palmer
- Oct. 20 & 21 Anchorage
Alaska Regional Hospital,
2801 DeBarr Rd.
- Oct. 27 Seattle
IBEW Local 46,
19802 62nd Ave S., Kent ■

ALASKA HEALTH CARE COMMISSION FALL 2012 MEETING

- Oct. 11 & 12 Anchorage
Focus on the employer's role in health and health care, featuring John Torinus, Jr., author of The Company that Solved Health Care. ■

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION OF EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS

- Nov. 12 San Diego
Annual HCCMCA/National CooperativeRx reception, San Diego Hilton Gaslamp Hotel, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

HCCMCA BOARD MEETING

- Nov. 27 ■



ALASKA WORKERS' COMP REFORM EFFORTS CONTINUE

The biggest lesson learned from the defeat of legislation to reform Alaska workers' comp law is that "all employee and employer groups need to stand together against the strength of the medical lobby," said Fred Brown, HCCMCA's executive director. In preparation for the next legislative session, HCCMCA is meeting with the Workers' Compensation Committee of Alaska, the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce, the Association of General Contractors, the Alaska Department of Administration and the Alaska Division of Workers' Compensation to plan next steps. ■

UPGRADES TO DISEASE MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY

Alere, the vendor that provides disease management services to participating HCCMCA member health plans, recently updated its computer system. The information Alere collects from individual participants now can be more completely and automatically integrated with the systems of other health care providers. For example, Alere can deliver program compliance information to an individual's health plan or pharmacy benefit management (PBM) company, which could then use the information to waive co-pays

or offer other incentives to individuals who are complying with the Disease Management

program guidelines. Privacy of all member health information continues to be a top priority. ■

WASHINGTON COALITION GROWTH PLANNING

HCCMCA Trustee Randy Scott and Coalition attorney Mary Stoll organized a meeting of the consultants and staff who support HCCMCA members in Washington State to discuss how to expand the Coalition in Washington. Another session is scheduled after the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans meeting in San Diego on Nov. 13. ■



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HEALTH FAIR DATES SET! SPREAD THE WORD TO YOUR EMPLOYEES.

Since 1994, the Health Care Cost Management Corporation of Alaska, Inc. (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 23 headquartered in Alaska and 13 headquartered in the Pacific Northwest.