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HHS Deputy Secretary Awards Health Care, Community Leaders in New York with Special Distinction for Improving Quality and Value Of Health Care

Albany, N.Y. – At a meeting today, Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Tevi Troy recognized providers, consumers, employers, insurers, and other community leaders that make up the New York Quality Alliance (NYQA) with a special federal distinction for their strong commitment to improving quality and value in health care. As a new Chartered Value Exchange (CVE), the organization is on the forefront of implementing cutting-edge, collaborative ways to transform health care at the local level.

“I applaud the efforts that health leaders in New York have taken to transform health care to a patient-focused marketplace,” HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said. “Together we are building a foundation for a transparent system that empowers consumers to obtain affordable, effective, and high-quality health care.”

“Thanks to their foresight and hard work, we’re coming closer to the day when those who chose to provide, pay for, or consume effective, competitively-priced health care will be rewarded for their smart choices,” Deputy Secretary Troy added.

“The NYQA is pleased to be designated as a Chartered Value Exchange, especially as it will allow us to access important Medicare data to use in our effort to promote statewide quality performance measurement among health care practitioners,” said Paul F. Macielak, president and CEO of the New York Health Plan Association. “Working with national and state experts, the NYQA hopes to improve quality and value in health care through the development of standardized physician report cards on performance. The addition of Medicare data will greatly enhance this effort.”

With the designation, the NYQA will gain access to information from Medicare that measures the quality of care physicians deliver to patients. These performance measurement results may be combined with similar private-sector data to produce more comprehensive information on the quality of care available across the state. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will begin providing these performance results to CVEs by the summer of 2008. The NYQA also 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, and will also feature tools, access to experts, and an ongoing private Web-based knowledge management system.

Over the last year, HHS has designated more than 100 Community Leaders who 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 and, after an extensive peer-review process of 38 applications, 14 collaboratives in a dozen states have been selected to receive charters from Secretary Leavitt.

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“Regional and local public-private collaboration is essential to the success of our efforts,” Secretary Leavitt noted. “At its core, health care is 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.”

CVEs represent one of several initiatives undertaken by HHS to implement a bold vision for health care reform built on four cornerstones. These include: adopting 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 to promote high-quality, efficient delivery of care. For more information, please visit <http://www.hhs.gov/valuedriven>.

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