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# The JPA Examiner

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## Project Access: Meeting the needs of the working poor



With the rising cost of insurance, many have been left behind when it comes to medical care. These individuals, known as the working poor, do not have employer-provided insurance, yet they make too much money to qualify for Medicaid.

This February, JPA administration met with Project Access to learn more. Eighty Jackson-area physicians joined a program to provide free care for the working poor who lack health insurance. The program, called Project Access, is a collaboration of physicians from the Jackson County Medical Society and Foote Hospital who are teaming with the Jackson County Community Foundation, LifeWays and the United Way of Jackson County.

The community foundation provided a \$40,000 grant to get the project started. Doctors volunteer their services, while Foote Hospital provides diagnostic testing and LifeWays provides administrative services.

Please see Project Access page 3

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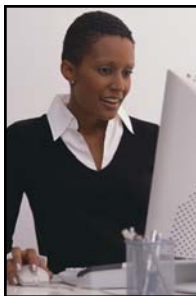
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## Patients prefer EMR use by physicians

Doctors looking to attract new patients may want to upgrade their medical record system to an electronic medical record (EMR).

This information comes as a result of a recent survey (conducted by Accenture) that found a majority of consumers report EMR technology plays a role in their selection of a physician. The good news is most patients would even pay extra at a visit to help absorb the cost of EMR technology if the price was reasonable.

Only 10 percent of doctors surveyed said they currently have the technology, with 86 percent of responding doctors citing the technology's cost as a concern. Physicians also worried about the time it



would take to implement a program and potential privacy risks.

According to the American Medical Association, studies suggest that the cost of implementing a system is \$30,000 per doctor with ongoing costs ranging between \$3,000 and \$15,000 a year per doctor.

Despite costs, numerous health experts tout EMRs as a way to lower increasing health care costs and reduce medical errors. The survey results also reflect the public's growing understanding of how EMRs help to improve care with 77 percent of consumers reporting they would have greater access to and more control over their medical records if they were in electronic form.

Ninety percent of doctors agreed EMRs would make sharing and obtaining information easy.

## Payer News

### Preferred Choices acquired by Priority Health

Trinity Health announced it has entered into an agreement to sell Care Choices HMO, Care Choices PPO and Preferred Choices PPO Health Plan to Priority Health, a Grand Rapids, MI based health plan. Priority Health is owned by three Michigan health systems: Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids, Munson Health in Traverse City and Northern Michigan Regional System in Petoskey.

Trinity Health based its decision on the company's desire to focus on its core business, which is the delivery of direct patient care. Their decision to sell Care/Preferred Choices to Priority Health was based on the compatible mission, vision and values of Priority Health. The company is financially-sound having earned an "A-" rating from A.M. Best.

Subject to regulatory approval, the sale should be finalized in late April. Provider contracts will continue to be in effect after the sale, subject to the contracts terms and conditions. Current Care/Preferred Choices credentialing will continue through the end of provider contracts. Notification will be sent if changes occur for referrals, EOBs, eligibility, authorization, benefits or claims status in 2007. Presently, JPA has an "evergreen" renewing contract for the Preferred Choices PPO. For more information, call Preferred Choices Customer Service at 800-992-6837, or visit Care Choices at [www.carechoices.com](http://www.carechoices.com) and Priority Health at [www.priorityhealth.com](http://www.priorityhealth.com).

### Healthy Blue Living well received

Last October, BCN introduced Healthy Blue Living, a new benefit plan to area employers. Since its inception, the plan, emphasizing personal commitment to wellness by rewarding healthy lifestyles, in turn reducing overall health care costs by an average of 10 percent, has been very well received. The premise is *patients who live healthy will pay less*.

Plan subscribers are evaluated against target scores in six aspects of overall health including alcohol use, blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, smoking status and weight. Members can agree to a treatment plan with doctor followup if they do not initially qualify.

**Primary care physician (PCP) offices will be compensated \$30 per patient per year.** Payouts will occur biannually. Enrollment requires submission of a Qualification Form from the member's PCP within the first 90 days of coverage, however it is the responsibility of the member to bring the form to their PCP.

For the employer's part, a smoke-free work environment is required and they are strongly encouraged to promote physical activity at work, provide healthy food choices on-site and host on-site Weight Watchers® meetings.

For more information, call Ted Drozd at (517) 322-8114.

### BCN offers OneBlue



On April 1, Blue Care Network will launch its new individual insurance product, OneBlue. OneBlue provides health care coverage for individuals who do not have group coverage through their employer. Rates are determined individually for the subscriber and spouse based on age, gender and smoking status.

The OneBlue product offers preventive care visits, prescription drug coverage, maternity care, referral care coordinated by the primary care physician and disease management and health education programs for qualifying individuals.

If you have any question, contact Ted Drozd at (517) 322-8114.

### BCN and BCBS acquire M-CARE

The purchase of Ann Arbor-based M-CARE by Blue Care Network and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan from the University of Michigan has been approved by the Michigan Office of Financial and Insurance Services and the Michigan Attorney General's Office.

The purchase was completed December 31.

There will be no immediate changes for M-CARE groups and members. Members will continue to receive coverage under the M-CARE name for the duration of their employer's or group's contract with M-CARE throughout 2007.

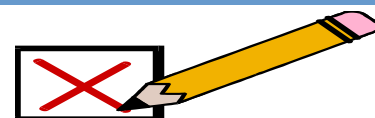
If you have any question, contact Ted Drozd at (517) 322-8114.

### New radiology authorization Lumbar Spine CT and MRI scans

Effective April 1, 2007, MRI and CT scans of the lumbar spine will require plan approval from BCN. They have developed criteria with input from practicing physicians. To hasten the authorization process, all requests for CT, Lumbar Spine (72131-72133) and MRI, Lumbar Spine (72148, 72149, 72158) for low back pain must be submitted via e-referral. Instructions are available on the e-referral web page. If the criteria are met, BCN will approve the procedure. If the criteria are not met, the case will pend for clinical review by the care management staff. If you have any question, contact Ted Drozd at (517) 322-8114.

# And the Survey Says...

## (2007 JPA Practice Survey Results)



Thank you to all the physicians and practice managers who completed the 2007 JPA Needs and Satisfaction Survey. We had a 40% response rate, up from last year's response rate of 31%. The survey results are used by the JPA administrative team and Board to improve services to our membership. Highlights of responding practices include:

- The majority are quite satisfied with JPA services with 83% rating JPA with a grade of "B+" or higher.
- More than 80% read the *JPA Examiner* newsletter on a regular basis. On the other hand, 62.5% have never visited the JPA website.
- E-mail usage is up with 78.1% using e-mail in the office. Over the past five years, this number has steadily increased.
- Most frequently mentioned practice issues are (1) transitioning to EMR systems, (2) the impact of the poor economy on practices and (3) the decrease in overall reimbursements.
- BCN program awareness is relatively high as the majority of practices report being "somewhat" to "very familiar" with the payer's programs.
- More PCP practice managers have become familiar with the Health e-Blue program and more than 40% said training for the program would be of value.
- 75% of PCP practices are aware that the Health e-Blue program can help increase revenue in their practice.
- P4P program awareness was mixed. A majority (62.5%) reported they would like more information on P4P programs.
- BCN: 91% are satisfied and a majority (86.2%) are satisfied with JPA's management of the BCN contract.
- Preferred Choices: 69.5% are satisfied and more than half (69.6%) are satisfied with JPA's management of the Preferred Choice's contract.

### Preferred Vendor Program

- Respondents for the most part are satisfied with the products and services provided by the JPA preferred vendors. Following is a vendor comparative chart.

Preferred Vendor	# worked w/vendor	Sat Score (Out of 4)
AMBS Call Center	22	3.3
AMTEK	3	-
Automatic Imaging	5	3.5
CP Federal Credit Union	2	3.0
DBI	17	3.5
Jamieson-Allen Agency	9	3.7
McKesson Medical/Surgical	21	3.3
Pro Image Uniforms	9	3.1
RTI Transcription Services	3	3.0
TDS Metrocom	19	3.1
Transworld System	3	3.0
Voice Data Network	6	3.0
Willis Information Technologies	13	3.5

## Welcome . . .



Welcome to Interstate Leasing, JPA's newest Preferred Vendor. The leasing product enables practices to acquire needed equipment by spreading the high cost into low payments and coordinating them with a reimbursement schedule. Interstate Leasing provides 100% of the needed funds and allows practices to take advantage of the inherent tax savings and flexible terms. Furnishing and equipment they provide include:

- MRI's and CT scanners
- X-ray equipment
- Lighting
- Computer hard/software
- Telephone systems
- Filing systems
- Furniture
- Bone Densitometer

Interstate Leasing also offers a turnkey lease program, a single lease that combines everything needed to set up a new office under one monthly payment.

To learn more, call Interstate Leasing at (888) 638-4200 or e-mail [info@interstateleasing.com](mailto:info@interstateleasing.com).

## Project Access

From page 1

Project Access is not a form of health insurance. Rather, it is a program that enables enrolled patients to see primary care doctors and receive other health care services at low or no cost. Each doctor plans to serve 10 Project Access patients and, with 50 PCP's and 50 specialists participating, a potential of 500 patients could be seen in the first year alone. Officials estimate 16,000 people could be eligible for the effort.

This attempt to meet the needs of the working poor is a blossoming effort with 20 other communities across the U.S. participating in similar programs.

# JACKSON PHYSICIANS ALLIANCE **JPA**

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**Making Healthcare  
Better**



**General Membership Meeting**  
*April 18, 2007 at 6:00 pm*  
*Foote Hospital*

**Don't Miss**

## **In the Door**

**Welcome the following new  
JPA physician members:**

**Dr. Dana Virgo**  
[OB/GYN]

**Dr. Mary Bentley**  
[Family Practice]

**Dr. Shivakumar Deva**  
[Hospitalist]

**Dr. Janki Gehi**  
[Hospitalist]

**Dr. Cyril Ruwende**  
[Cardiology]



**FREE Human Resource  
Hot Line**  
**1-800-457-8829**

In response to membership request for human resource (HR) assistance, JPA purchased a human resource hot line program for all JPA practices from HR One (formerly Amtek). The Hot Line Service provides consultation from 8:30am to 5pm Monday through Friday. The service provides access to HR professionals to help with HR and compliance issues.

*The FREE Hotline Program services include:*

**Human Resources Hot Line**

- Hotline access for best practice and compliance assistance.

**Employment Poster Compliance Program**

- A complete set of Michigan State and federal employees' rights and responsibilities posters.

**HR e-News and E-mail**

- A weekly e-mail newsletter and e-mail alerts regarding compliance and HR best practices.
- A practice can e-mail questions to HR One about simple or major employment challenges.

Additional services for a fee include:

- Employment Handbook review or development.
- Annual assessment.

Please complete your **HR Hot Line Activation Form** and fax to Cheryl Meschke at (517) 817-2142.