

For Immediate Release

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Reining in healthcare costs with patient-centered tools

Woodstock, GA. – July 29, 2009 – With health care costs spiraling out of control across the nation, employers are seeking ways to reign in costs, as absorbing significant cost hikes will no longer be an option. There are a myriad of reasons why costs have gone up. They range from the:

- unhealthy behaviors of individuals,
- proliferation of new and expensive medical services,
- the overuse of those services and
- pricing strategies of drug companies and hospitals.

However there are some ways that employers and patients alike can have an impact on rising health care costs and their companies' bottom line.

Most adults spend more of their waking hours at work than anywhere else, making the workplace crucial to improving employee health. Worksite wellness programs can help influence and support healthy behaviors such as:

- Weight reduction
- Improved physical fitness
- Smoking cessation
- Lower levels of stress

By providing tools to help employees who might not be ready to act on changing their unhealthy behaviors, a wellness program has a better chance of making a real impact.

It is estimated that more than 95% of chronic illness care is given by the person who has the illness.¹ A new health journal, the bluehealer® diary, enables patients to track their medications, habits and more, helping them better communicate with their physician. After all, the more complete information provided to a physician doctor during an office visit, the better he or she will be able to set up an effective treatment plan. In fact, according to Science Daily, "A systematic review of studies published over the past four decades has confirmed that good doctor-patient communication makes a difference not only in patient satisfaction but in patient outcomes including resolution of chronic headaches, changes in emotional states, lower blood sugar values in diabetics, improved blood pressure readings in hypertensives, and other important health indicators."² The key difference in successfully managing a disease versus one that is not managed is the patient's level of involvement and accountability for his or her condition.

Workplace wellness programs have potential to help keep costs down by educating employees on ways to take better care of themselves. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 90% of all healthcare costs are preventable.³ Consider the following healthcare costs for some of America's top medical conditions.

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- Diabetes costs the U.S. \$132 billion a year. More than 20.8 million children and adults in the U.S. have diabetes.⁴
- In 2005, an estimated \$42 billion was spent on hypertension, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. In addition, AHRQ estimates that more than \$76 billion was spent on heart conditions in 2005.⁵
- The leading cause of death, illness and disability in the U.S., chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), accounted for \$53 billion in health expenditures in 2005 when combined with costs for asthma.⁶
- According to WebMD, “The National Headache Foundation estimates that 28 million Americans suffer from migraines. More women than men get migraines and a quarter of all women with migraines suffer four or more attacks a month.”⁷

Track and transform your health

A health journal is an easy way to keep track of scenarios like the following:

- Knowing what you ate before you became violently ill
- Noticing that your chronic condition became worse during allergy season or periods of high stress.
- Tracking location and intensity of pain.
- Tracking blood sugar.

That’s what makes the bluehealer® diary unique. It can help you understand what makes you sick, how to take care of yourself, and how to keep yourself healthy. By using the bluehealer® diary, consumers will no longer have to struggle to recall several months worth of symptoms during a doctor’s visit. From tracking migraines to diabetes, hypertension to asthma, and more, the bluehealer® diary helps patients to become an advocate in their own health care.

1 Wagner, EH, Austin BT, Von Koroff M. Improving outcomes in chronic illness. *Managed Care Quarterly*. 1996;4(2):12-25.

2 Doctor-Patient Communication Has A Real Impact On Health. *Science Daily* April 2007. Retrieved July 23, 2009 from [Sciencedaily.com: http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/04/070409144754.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/04/070409144754.htm).

3 Wagner, EH, Austin BT, Von Koroff M. Improving outcomes in chronic illness. *Managed Care Quarterly*. 1996;4(2):12-25.

4 Matria Healthcare.

5 Van Dusen, Allison (February 6, 2008). America’s Most Expensive Medical Conditions. Retrieved October 13, 2008 from [Forbes.com: http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/06/health-diseases-expensive-forbeslife-cx_avd_0206health.html](http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/06/health-diseases-expensive-forbeslife-cx_avd_0206health.html).

6 Van Dusen, Allison (February 6, 2008). America’s Most Expensive Medical Conditions. Retrieved October 13, 2008 from [Forbes.com: http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/06/health-diseases-expensive-forbeslife-cx_avd_0206health.html](http://www.forbes.com/2008/02/06/health-diseases-expensive-forbeslife-cx_avd_0206health.html).

7 WebMd. Migraines and Headaches: Migraines. Retrieved October 14, 2008 from: <http://women.webmd.com/guide/migraines-headaches-migraines>.

About bluehealer® diary

Do you want to know what you ate before you became violently ill? Or did you notice that your chronic condition became worse during allergy season or periods of high stress? A health journal is an easy way to keep track of scenarios like these. It can help you understand what makes you sick, how to take care of yourself, and how to keep yourself healthy. That’s what makes the bluehealer® diary unique. Track not only daily work and family activities, but also exercise and health events on one page, all at-a-glance. By doing so you can bring order and peace to your life and even make a connection between daily activities, stress and your health.

Because of the flexibility to customize the columns as well as the inclusion of health journaling options, the bluehealer diary is perfect not only for those who have a chronic health condition, but also for working moms and stay-at-home moms. Take control of your life and your health with the bluehealer® diary, an effective way to stay organized and on schedule while tracking symptoms and medication related to health and chronic illness.

About the Author

Angela Shipp has learned to balance a hectic career and busy social calendar while staying healthy and organized at the same time. She is the author of bluehealer® diary, a personal command center for family schedules and health journaling. The bluehealer® diary can be found at www.bluehealeradiary.com.

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