



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 16, 2005

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Francois de Brantes
(203) 373-2352

**LOCAL TOP-PERFORMING PHYSICIANS RECOGNIZED BY EMPLOYERS;
CAPITAL DISTRICT PHYSICIANS HEALTH PLAN, Inc. (CDPHP) TO JOIN AS
A LICENSEE FOR 2006**

Bridges to Excellence pay-for-performance program continues to grow in Albany area

ALBANY- Capital District physicians participating in a pay-for-performance (P4P) effort are being recognized and rewarded for delivering higher quality care. Bridges to Excellence (BTE) was created to encourage higher quality care through incentives and is made up of physicians, health plans and several of the area's largest employers, including General Electric, Verizon, Price Chopper and Hannaford Brothers.

BTE is based upon physician recognition programs designed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and its partners, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. The pay-for-performance programs operated by Bridges to Excellence are Diabetes Care Link, Cardiac Care Link and Physician Office Link. Both Diabetes and Cardiac Care Link focus on meeting approved high standards for treating chronic conditions, while Physician Office Link provides incentives for improving patient information processing and data management. To date, BTE has paid over \$470,000 to Capital District physicians and over \$2 million nationally. This first total covers 121 locally recognized physicians in more than 25 practices, including Prime Care Physicians, Community Care Physicians and CapitalCare Medical Group.

Dr. Thomas Auer, CEO and Medical Director of Community Care Physicians, a multi-specialty medical group with 191 clinicians practicing across 4 counties in the Capital Region, says, "Participating in the Bridges to Excellence collaborative and working with NCQA to achieve Physician Office Link recognition has allowed us to emphasize the importance of mapping systems and improving efficiency as a way of

improving care and patient outcomes.” He adds, “Eight of our offices have received POL recognition and 4 more are currently in the review process. NCQA has done a great job of setting standards that reflect true quality care and it is a great source of pride to our practitioners knowing that we are ‘measuring up’ to that standard.”

"Implementing electronic medical record and prescription management systems to improve quality and efficiency (Physician Office Link) is the right thing to do," said John A. Lutz, CEO of Prime Care Physicians, a practice of 85 physicians. "We're looking forward to continuing to demonstrate to our patients that we deliver top-notch care in diabetes and cardiac areas as well."

CapitalCare Medical Group, a multi-specialty primary care group, has five practice sites that have received PPC recognition thus far. “Our other offices are using many of these systematic procedures, even in advance of their formal application for participation in Bridges,” said Dr. Louis Snitkoff, medical director of CapitalCare, “And we are pleased to be among those who are leading the movement to enhance the quality of health care delivered in upstate New York.”

BTE is rapidly expanding beyond the four current market areas (including Cincinnati, Louisville and Boston) with the program expected to launch in Minnesota and Georgia in early 2006. BTE creates an incentive to improve quality by giving physician’s financial rewards, recognition and support tools they need to improve medical care and outcomes. Currently, there are over 100 different pay-for-performance programs operating nationwide with BTE as the largest employer-sponsored effort to reward physicians for delivering high-quality care.

New York State Health Commissioner Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H., said, "Pay-for-performance programs like Bridges to Excellence are becoming increasingly important in our efforts to improve health care quality in New York. We are actively encouraging these types of initiatives and will be sponsoring five regional pay-for-performance demonstrations over the next two years that will bring together government, business, insurers, providers and consumers in a collaborative effort to further improve New York's world-class health care system."

CDPHP is the first health plan to license BTE in the region, and is actively involved in promoting the program through a multi-pronged approach to its employer groups and network physicians. Starting in 2006, CDPHP looks forward to further

developing the program for its clients in order to continue its mission of delivering high quality care. "As an innovator and market leader in improving our health care delivery system, CDPHP is proud to participate in the Bridges to Excellence program," said William J. Cromie, MD, MBA, president and CEO, CDPHP. "As the first local licensee, it is our hope that other area health plans will also follow and adopt the program."

MVP Health Care has also been an active promoter of the BTE program. In 2006, MVP will provide direct financial awards to those primary care practices recognized by NCQA for Physician Practice Connections. "Supporting quality improvement at the physician practice level and rewarding top performance through programs such as BTE represent the future of managed care," said Dr. Jerry Salkowe, VP Clinical Quality Improvement. "MVP has partnered with the Mohawk Valley Medical Associates IPA to make these new rewards possible."

In addition to bonus payments, recognized physicians in BTE programs are highlighted in physician directories and on a Physician Quality Ratings site promoted by employer participants, thus helping patients identify doctors best able to treat their particular conditions. To encourage patients to take a more active role in managing chronic illnesses, some employees of these participating companies have access to an on-line customized care management tool developed by WebMD Health called *Diabetes CareRewards*. This innovative tool will allow individuals to record self-care activities, learn more about their illness, and earn reward points toward a range of small financial and non-financial incentives.

##

The Bridges to Excellence coalition is a not-for-profit organization created to encourage significant leaps in the quality of care by recognizing and rewarding health care providers who demonstrate that they deliver safe, timely, effective, efficient and patient-centered care. In addition to National Business Coalition on Health (NBCH), Bridges to Excellence participants include large employers, health plans, the National Committee on Quality Assurance, MEDSTAT and WebMD Health, among others. The organizations are united in their shared goal of improving health care quality through measurement, reporting, rewards and education.

For more information on Bridges to Excellence or to find out how to participate as an employer or a physician, visit the program's web site at <http://www.bridgestoexcellence.org/> or contact the Medstat Group at 1-800-224-7161. For a complete list of recognized physicians to date, see: <http://recognition.ncqa.org/>.