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For immediate release: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2009

Diabetes and obesity prevention program succeeding for South San sixth graders

First-year results show blood sugar levels down, activity levels up

San Antonio, TX– A program designed to prevent diabetes and battle obesity in more than 700 sixth-graders in the South San Antonio ISD is working according to results released today by the **Social & Health Research Center (SHRC)** in San Antonio.

The program, dubbed “Bienestar,” is aimed at reducing the risk for Type II Diabetes in middle school students, a group increasingly at risk to develop diabetes. Bienestar targets reductions in body fat, increased fitness levels and reductions in blood sugars, all key markers in the fight to reduce the risk of Type II Diabetes in children and adults.

When the program began in August 2008, nearly 40% of students in the Bienestar study were obese. Some 15 percent had impaired blood sugar regulation as well as low fitness levels. By the end of the school year, obesity decreased in students in the program. Fitness levels increased and blood sugar levels dropped significantly in students found to be at high risk for diabetes when the program began in August 2008.

Bienestar in South San ISD is underwritten by a three-year, \$750,000 grant from the WellMed Charitable Foundation. Foundation Chairman Dr. George Rapier cheered the results.

“So many youngsters and adults in our community struggle with Type II Diabetes. We know nutrition and exercise can help prevent the onset of diabetes. The Bienestar program now confirms what our belief has been. This is great news,” he said. “I hope parents, teachers and school administrators here and across the county embrace these results and institute fitness, nutrition and health programs in their schools.”

WellMed Medical Management is a diversified healthcare company and insurance provider serving more than 80,000 patients and health plan members, mostly Medicare-eligible seniors in Texas, Florida, Arkansas and New Mexico. WellMed is an industry leader in medical risk management, highly effective disease management and chronic care programs, healthcare delivery services, and more.

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