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WellMed's Revolutionary Disease Management Program Receives National Leadership Award

**Multi-million dollar annual investment in no-cost prescription vouchers
among factors credited with reduced hospitalizations, better health
outcomes for seniors at high risk for cardiac, vascular disease**

San Antonio, TX – One of the nation's leading advocates for the promotion of effective disease management, chronic care and preventive healthcare today recognized WellMed Medical Management, Inc. for its groundbreaking Disease Management program.

DMAA: The Care Continuum Alliance (www.DMAA.org) awarded WellMed leaders with its **Outstanding Quality Initiative Award** today in Hollywood, Florida during the **Population Health Improvement Leadership Awards** luncheon at the 10th annual meeting of the **DMAA**. The award recognizes outstanding achievements in and contributions to the science and practice of chronic disease care.

Headquartered in San Antonio, TX, WellMed is a leading healthcare provider and industry leader in medical risk management, highly effective disease management and chronic care programs, healthcare delivery services and more. The growing physician-owned practice management company specializes in senior care, operating more than 30 medical clinics in Texas and Florida.

"At WellMed, we will invest more than \$3 million this year alone to underwrite prescription drug costs for seniors with chronic disease states because we have found it to be a proven strategy for the delivery of quality preventive health care for seniors," said WellMed Founder and CEO George M. Rapier III, M.D. "That commitment to effective, quality health care is one of the reasons WellMed serves 1 in 5 Medicare-eligible seniors in our community. This recognition by DMAA reflects very well on our company's mission and on our health care professionals."

WellMed received the **Outstanding Quality Initiative Award** based on the radical process redesign of its Disease Management program, known as **HealthRight**, which serves seniors with high-risk, high-volume, high-cost and/or problem-prone disease states including **Congestive Heart Failure, Ischemic Heart Disease, Diabetes and COPD/Asthma**.

Starting in 2005, WellMed leadership proposed implementing several innovative initiatives to improve disease management:

- WellMed introduced mandatory lipid management testing and the **Medication Voucher Program (MVP)** for prescription medication and friction-reducing diabetic shoes for seniors at high risk for cardiac and vascular disease. If a patient's insurance prescription coverage runs out, the program covers the full price of the much-needed medications through the so-called "donut hole" until insurance coverage kicks in again in the new year.
- This program resulted in a **14.8 percent decrease in hospitalizations** over four years among Disease Management patients.
- These efforts also resulted in improved lipid results and a dramatic upswing in **prescription refill rates**, which went from **11.1 percent in 2005 to 75.5 percent in 2007** thanks to the removal of cost as a barrier to patients picking up their medication. **For 2008, the prescription refill rate stands at more than 80 percent.**
- WellMed partnered with a sister transportation company – Comfort Care Transportation Service – to provide **unlimited transportation** to and from medical appointments for Disease Management patients at no cost.
- This resulted in the rate of patients keeping scheduled medical appointments going from **78 percent in 2005 to 95 percent in 2007.**

"It just makes sense – if your doctor prescribes medication necessary for your health, you should have the prescription filled. Sadly, some patients can't afford the medicine they need to manage their health effectively, which is why we launched the MVP program," Rapiet said. "The same holds true for getting to the doctor. Lack of dependable transportation should not be a barrier to good health, but some seniors can no longer drive themselves, or can't afford to pay for auto insurance, gas or the mechanic. Starting in 2009, all of our Medicare Advantage plan patients will qualify for unlimited complimentary rides for regular medical appointments."

"It's all part of our mission to help the sick become well, and to help patients understand and control their health in a lifelong effort at wellness."

WellMed was among five groups recognized by the DMAA. DMAA earlier this year solicited award nominations in a rigorous process that evaluated nominations against seven core criteria focusing on commitment, program design, implementation,

innovation, outcomes-based orientation, scope and potential impact, and vision and leadership. Each award winner also met category-specific criteria.

“The awardees we honor today have distinguished themselves as leaders in population-based approaches to preventing and managing chronic conditions,” DMAA President and CEO Tracey Moorhead said. “Their contributions to the fight against chronic disease have made a lasting difference in so many lives.”

To find out how to sign up for WellMed’s healthcare services or to inquire about a specific physician, call **(210) 615-WELL (9355)**. Learn more at **www.wellmedmedicalgroup.com**.

WellMed Medical Management is a diversified healthcare company and insurance provider serving 77,000 patients and insured members, mostly Medicare-eligible seniors throughout Texas, along Florida's Treasure Coast and in the Las Cruces, New Mexico area. WellMed is an industry leader in medical risk management, highly effective disease management and chronic care programs, healthcare delivery services, and more.

WellMed is South Texas' largest physician-owned practice management company, specializing in senior health care since 1990. With more than 30 medical clinics in Texas and Florida, the mission of the healthcare company and insurance provider is to change the face of healthcare delivery for seniors.

MEDIA INQUIRIES ONLY

Bill Connolly
Sr. VP, Shared Services
(210) 632-1497
bconnolly@wellmed.net

Mike J. Ryan
Marketing Director
(210) 383-6910
mjryan@wellmed.net

Dan Calderón
The CE Group
(210) 846-5132
dcalderon11@satx.rr.com