

Wellmark Announces Results of Physical Medicine Pilot on Quality

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Des Moines-After only one year, a pilot program designed to measure patient quality of care shows significant clinical outcomes and health care cost reductions. The Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield 2008 pilot was a quality improvement program for Iowa and South Dakota physical medicine providers. A total of 238 chiropractors, physical therapists, and occupational therapists participated in the pilot, submitting information on the care provided to 5,500 Wellmark members with musculoskeletal disorders.

Data from participating clinicians show that 89 percent of the Wellmark members treated in the pilot reported a greater than 30 percent improvement in 30 days. In addition, Wellmark claims data from members who received care from chiropractic or physical therapy care were less likely to have surgery and experienced lower total health care cost.

Dr. Shayan Sheybanl, clinics operations administrator at the Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, shared thoughts about the value of the program's data collection and reporting. "The faculty, staff, and interns of the Palmer Clinics were able to objectively and consistently gather valuable information for services provided for our Wellmark patients that support the College's commitment to providing quality patient care. Overall, we have a positive impression of this program, and we are planning to continue our participation during the 2009 fiscal year. Continued participation in Wellmark's pilot satisfies our desire to contribute to new knowledge continual improvements, and the development of quality-focused patient care."

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