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**OREGON HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS, PHYSICIANS AND PURCHASERS JOIN FOR
IMPROVED CONSUMER HEALTH CARE**

Transparent Quality Measurement is First Step in Three-Year Health Care Improvement Plan

PORTLAND, Ore. (Sept. 14, 2007) – The Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation (Quality Corp) today announced an important milestone in a three-year state-wide effort to improve the quality of health care for patients with chronic conditions. Ten of the state’s largest health insurance plans will join members of Oregon’s physician and business communities to work together to deliver better care, and information about that care, to Oregon’s consumers.

Through Quality Corp’s initiative, health plans, purchasers and the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are committing to support and fund a publicly-accessible, comprehensive database of health care-related quality information. Health care experts believe community-level cooperation and coordination among providers, insurers, businesses and consumers is the best way to measure how Oregon is doing as a community at getting the right care to the right people at the right time. A state-wide effort that is independent and trusted by providers and consumers will assess quality of care in a standard way that allows for easy and fair comparisons.

“Having the wholehearted commitment of the state’s leading health care and business communities is a major step toward improving the quality of Oregon’s health care system,” said Nancy Clarke, executive director, Quality Corp. “Consumers should be smiling; overcoming this critical hurdle was no small achievement. And with the growing support of Oregon’s physicians, we are on the path to making health care better for everyone.”

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recently awarded a \$600,000 grant to help support Quality Corp's goal. Oregon is part of the Foundation's nationwide *Aligning Forces for Quality, The Regional Market Project* initiative. *Aligning Forces for Quality* is designed to help communities advance the quality of chronic-care provided in doctors' offices, clinics and other outpatient settings at the local-level:

- Support efforts that make quality of care information publicly available;
- Educate purchasers, patients and consumers on their role in demanding and rewarding high-quality care; and
- Help health care providers build their own capacity to produce and use information to improve their care quality.

Practicing physicians are helping to design the effort so that it really works to improve patients' health. Many are also investing in their own electronic health systems that both measure and prompt high quality care.

"Unlike many quality measurement projects, Oregon's Quality Corp effort will do more than simply provide clinic scores and that's something we can support," said Klaus Martin, M.D., president of the Oregon Medical Association. "Identifying and spreading quality success stories is an important part of the substantial, lasting improvements needed to reform an ailing health care system. Standardized measurement, if done well, can help us achieve that reform."

Physicians play an integral role in the *Aligning Forces for Quality* as they assist with making health care quality information publicly available, allowing consumers to make more informed decisions about their health care. Doctors will also get detailed information to help them improve the care they provide.

"The cooperation between plans and physicians will produce better quality and value in health care for Oregon's workforce," said Duncan Wyse, president of the Oregon Business Council.

Participating health plans are: CareOregon, ClearChoice Health Plans Inc, Health Net of Oregon, Kaiser Permanente, LifeWise Health Plan of Oregon, PacificSource Health Plans, ODS Health Plan, Providence Health Plans, and Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon. In addition, The Oregon Division of Medical Assistance Programs will participate for their fee-for-service program.

The Oregon Coalition of Health Care Purchasers and the Public Employees' Benefit Board are also providing financial support to the initiative.

The initiative will officially begin in Sept. with a search for a firm to manage the data under legal agreements that assure the privacy and security of the data. After a round of testing consumers will have access to the information in early 2009.

ABOUT OREGON HEALTH CARE QUALITY CORPORATION

The Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation is a non-profit partnership where leaders work together for quality. Managed by a balanced Board of Directors, senior representatives from health plans, physician groups, purchasers, hospitals, consumers and government all cooperate for shared goals. Founded in 2002, the Quality Corp's projects have demonstrated the value of working cooperatively. For more information see www.Q-corp.org.

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