

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Mike Miniati, Health Integrated
813-388-4030 or mminiati@healthintegrated.com

Healthcare Business Leaders Share Strategies for Driving Health Plan Performance in Age of Reform, During Health Integrated Summit

Tampa, FL – April 9, 2009 – Health Integrated, Inc., a Targeted Population Health Management company focused on the critical interplay between medical and psychosocial health, recently hosted a strategic summit that brought together key executives from health plans across the country to discuss strategies to address healthcare reform under the Obama administration.

The latest in Health Integrated's ongoing Executive Leadership Series, the session, titled "Driving Health Plan Performance in the Age of Reform," attracted executives from health plans, physician groups and public policy organizations from across the country. During the forum, which took place on Feb. 12 and 13 in St. Petersburg Beach, Fla., participants agreed that it is important to adopt strategies that improved health and quality of life for health plan members while also reducing costs.

Julie Barnes, deputy director of health policy program at the New America Foundation, discussed the politics of healthcare in the Obama administration. "The economic stresses on the healthcare system can no longer be sustained," she says. "Federal and state budgets cannot sustain health cost growth, employers and the middle class face challenges in affording coverage, insurers are missing 46 million potential customers, and the range of quality must be improved." Barnes added that in order to be successful, healthcare reform proposals must contain four elements: bipartisan support; access to quality, affordable health coverage; improvement in the quality of patient care and efficiency of the delivery system; and sustainable financing.

"It is an exciting time to be in healthcare. With reform on the horizon, it is not a matter of 'if' but 'when' health plans, including safety net plans, will use proven approaches to improve care quality as well as quality of life for their most vulnerable members," says forum participant Jennifer Babcock, director of policy for the Association of Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP). "Health Integrated brought together the right mix of experts in a comfortable setting to debate, discuss and share innovations and strategies that work, and I for one really appreciate that." Babcock spoke about current healthcare trends affecting safety net health plans, including an increased focus by providers to implement a "whole patient" approach and the emerging Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) concept.

Other topics discussed included:

- Chronic illness as a key driver of healthcare costs and the need for reform - Chronically ill individuals with psychological challenges (depression, anxiety, etc.) and social support issues (lack of family support) represent a disproportionate percentage of a health plan's cost and are particularly costly to the health system.
- Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 – The new law takes effect in October 2009, and health plans are preparing to meet federal requirements in offering equitable coverage for mental health and addiction issues. Participants discussed impact, implications and mitigating factors for health plans.
- Healthcare Data Analytics – how information technology can help in restructuring the health plan's relationships with providers and subscribers, resulting in lower costs of operations and care, improved outcomes and better insight to medical treatments via the electronic health record

- PCMH -- Participants examined PCMH as a way to provide a much-needed focal point for every patient in a complex healthcare system. Currently being studied by managed care organizations and professional associations in various pilots across the United States, PCMH is emerging as a model that could address fundamental flaws in the fragmented U.S. healthcare system, in which most patients currently move between points of care taking with them the responsibility for conveying complicated and confusing medical information.

“By incorporating a patient-centered approach into their care management strategies, health plans have the opportunity to improve performance, resulting in better outcomes and quality of life for members while reducing healthcare costs and potentially meeting reform requirements,” says Sam Toney, MD, Health Integrated’s chief medical officer. “Patients will have better outcomes, physicians will get to know their patients better, and payers will be able to better predict costs and operate more efficiently, for example.”

PCMH allows the patient to more easily access care that is integrated, patient-centered, comprehensive, and safe, Toney adds. “As such, the PCMH approach may be especially beneficial to improving the overall care to chronically ill patients, and doing so at a lower overall cost.”

Chronically ill patients with co-morbid conditions, including complex psychosocial issues, represent the greatest disproportionate costs for the nation’s health plans. “A balanced approach taking into consideration medical, psychological and social health can improve these individuals’ quality of life while lowering healthcare costs,” says Christopher Valerian, DO, executive medical director of Health Integrated. “Any model that looks at the whole patient, including PCMH, will provide a good platform for integrating effective care to improve physical, psychological and behavioral outcomes.”

Given the high interest of PCMH, Health Integrated announced the launch of its new PCMH collaborative forum, a program for customers interested in keeping up with the latest thinking about the emerging healthcare delivery model. As part of this initiative Health Integrated will facilitate email communications, access to groups of clinicians focused on building medical home, quarterly meetings and discussions, dissemination of industry materials important to PCMH, readiness assessment tools, and access to industry PCMH experts.

“We believe it is important to provide venues for our customers to gain insight into key topics by sharing their experiences and ideas, allowing them to adopt strategies that work quickly and effectively. Doing so also helps us stay focused on delivering solutions that meet our customers’ most critical business needs,” says Tom Joyer, vice president of business development at Health Integrated.

Health Integrated’s next Executive Leadership Summit is scheduled for July 28 and 29 in Chicago. For updates on information on logistics and content, please check the Events page at www.healthintegrated.com.

About Health Integrated

Health Integrated is a Targeted Population Health Management company dedicated to integrating health with life. Driven by a strong entrepreneurial culture, Health Integrated addresses the critical interplay between physical, psychological and social health. Working with health care providers, health plans and their members, Health Integrated drives improvements in health status, quality of life and clinical outcomes while reducing avoidable utilization and healthcare costs. For more information, visit www.healthintegrated.com.

###