



Family Physicians and Employer Coalitions Partner to Address Sustainability and Effectiveness of Primary Care to Improve Health and Wellbeing of All Americans

WASHINGTON – July 15, 2020 – The primary care system in the United States is collapsing due to decades of underinvestment, a poorly designed financing structure and a crushing set of administrative functions. The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions (National Alliance) believe that collectively we can do better. These two national organizations representing family physicians and employers are collaborating to change how care is paid for and delivered to ensure comprehensive, continuous and coordinated advanced primary care for the more than 150 million Americans with employer-sponsored insurance.

“Patients and families want an accessible, high-quality primary care system and primary care physicians want to practice in a more patient-centered way that is financed appropriately,” said Shawn Martin, American Academy of Family Physicians CEO designee. “Our work with the National Alliance and regional employer coalitions will drive improvements to ensure that advanced primary care is prioritized, properly structured and appropriately funded.”

It is well established that states and countries that [prioritize access to, and funding for, comprehensive and continuous primary care](#) have better health outcomes and lower per-capita costs. Despite the known and proven benefits of primary care, the United States continues to underfund and underinvest in primary care. To address these concerns, earlier this year the National Alliance [released a report](#) that outlined the key attributes for providing high value advanced primary care.

“Advanced primary care needs to be the backbone of our healthcare system,” said Michael Thompson, National Alliance president and CEO. “We must invest more in primary care if we are going to improve the health and wellbeing of Americans and reduce overall costs.”

This collaboration is the first of its kind between a primary care organization and the employer coalition community. Through this partnership, a roadmap will be developed that will set the standard for how purchasers and physicians can work together to deliver meaningful and measurable improvements in how care is paid for and delivered.

“Due to COVID-19 primary care practices are on life support,” said Elizabeth Mitchell, president and CEO, Pacific Business Group on Health (PBGH). “Employers know that primary care is essential to a healthy work force. Businesses believe now is the time to take action and harness the lessons learned from the pandemic to fundamentally reorganize primary care and reinvent our health system.”

In addition to PBGH, a number of coalitions have programs in place to support and sustain advanced primary care in their communities. This partnership builds on the efforts of organizations such as Connecticut Business Group on Health, Houston Business Coalition on Health, Memphis Business Group on Health, Pittsburgh Business Group on Health, Rhode Island Business Group on Health and Washington Health Alliance – all of whom are taking leadership positions in advancing the importance of primary care within their regions.

“There are good examples across the country of highly effective practices that deliver superior results for both patients and employers today,” said Christopher Crow, MD, president of Catalyst Health Network, a URAC accredited clinically integrated network with nearly 1,000 primary care providers caring for more than 1 million patients in Texas. “Our ability to partner with employer coalitions at a regional level will be critical to accelerate the proper financing model to enable primary care delivery to help our communities thrive with improved health and wellbeing.

About AAFP

Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 136,700 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the largest medical society devoted solely to primary care. Family physicians conduct approximately one in five office visits – that’s 192 million visits annually or 48% more than the next most visited medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America’s underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine’s cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care. To learn more, visit aafp.org/media and familydoctor.org.

About National Alliance

The National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions (National Alliance) is the only nonprofit, purchaser-led organization with a national and regional structure dedicated to driving health and healthcare value across the country. Its members represent private and public sector, nonprofit, and Taft-Hartley organizations, and more than 45 million Americans, spending \$300 billion annually on healthcare. To learn more, visit nationalalliancehealth.org, connect with us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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Media contacts:

Megan Moriarty
mmoriarty@aafp.org
800.274.2237, ext 6052

Cary Conway
cconway@nationalalliancehealth.org
972.649.4707