

Magellan Health Services Joins NCQA in Piloting Industry Standards for Cultural Competency

AVON, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Mar. 3, 2009-- Magellan Health Services, Inc. (Nasdaq:MGLN) is participating in a pilot study to test the measurability of a set of standards established by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) to assess the quality of culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services. Magellan is providing feedback on the following standards developed by NCQA:

- The gathering and use of cultural demographic data;
- Availability and accessibility of diverse language services;
- Provider network diversity and cultural competence; and
- Commitment to accountability and quality improvement in providing services to diverse member populations.

In 2007, Magellan launched a comprehensive cultural competency initiative to improve the quality of health outcomes across cultural, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic populations by aligning clinical programs, and provider networks, staff and member education to ensure the needs of a culturally diverse population are met effectively. Magellan's participation in the NCQA pilot study supports this commitment to cultural competency.

"Cultural competence is essential to providing quality health care services," said René Lerer, M.D., Magellan's president and chief executive officer. "By removing cultural and language barriers, health care consumers and providers are able to work together more effectively and efficiently to address health care concerns."

Magellan's multi-cultural approach to managing care extends beyond raising awareness to implementing systemic changes in how the company approaches the therapeutic relationship with members and how it operates with its business partners. In addition to working with NCQA to test the feasibility of proposed industry standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate care, Magellan has created a number of resources and implemented procedures including the following:

- Developing a comprehensive resource kit, including self-assessments for Magellan providers and employees to assess their cultural competence. The resource kit also includes a consumer-oriented evaluation for individuals to assess their providers' level of cultural competence and is available online at <https://www.magellanprovider.com/MHS/MGL/education/culturalcompetency/index.asp>. With these tools, employees and providers are better able to deliver care in a manner compatible with individuals' preferred language, and cultural beliefs and practices regarding their health;
- Actively recruiting and working to retain and promote Magellan staff, leadership and network providers that reflect the diversity and languages of local cultures;
- Conducting ongoing staff and provider training that builds upon cultural awareness, skills and practices when developing and delivering culturally proficient services;
- Providing language assistance, including bilingual staff and interpreter services at no cost to any individual with limited English proficiency;
- Making patient-related communications available in languages commonly used by the groups represented in Magellan's service areas.

"According to the latest U.S. Census report, more than 19 percent of individuals over the age of five speak a language other than English at home," said Malena Albo, Magellan's national director of cultural competency. "By being sensitive and responding to these cultural differences, individuals receive customized care that will enable them to achieve their recovery goals more quickly."

Magellan is one of nine accredited managed care organizations participating in NCQA's culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services standards pilot. The results of the pilot will be incorporated into the final set of NCQA standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services and Disparities Reduction, scheduled to be released in mid-2009. The standards will be released as a publication for organizations to use for self-assessment and improvement.

About Magellan: Headquartered in Avon, Conn., Magellan Health Services, Inc. (Nasdaq:MGLN) a leading specialty health care management organization. Its customers include health plans, corporations and government agencies.

Source: Magellan Health Services, Inc.

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Media Contacts:

Tina Carroll, 314-387-5345

or

Erin Somers, 410-953-2405

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