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INSPIRIS and Mercy Care of Arizona named winners in URAC's Best Practices in Consumer Empowerment and Protection Awards

INSPIRIS CarePlus Nurse Practitioner-Led Care program with Mercy Care of Arizona wins Best of Show Award and Silver Award in the Health Care Management category in first-ever nationwide competition recognizing health care management programs that empower, protect consumers

Washington, D.C. April 3, 2008 – URAC announced the winners of its inaugural Best Practices in Consumer Empowerment and Protection Awards competition recently, naming INSPIRIS and Mercy Care of Arizona as partners to receive one of only two Best in Show winners, as well as the Silver Award winner in the Health Care Management category. The awards were presented during URAC's Best Practices in Consumer Empowerment and Protection Conference March 25 in Orlando Florida. During the conference, award finalists presented their model programs to attendees so these best practices can be duplicated in communities across the country.

INSPIRIS is a health care management company focused on improving the quality of life for the frail elderly, chronically ill and those with disabilities, while reducing the cost to Medicare Advantage and Medicaid health plans. Mercy Care Plan, a managed care organization that provides health care services to people in Arizona's Medicaid and Medicare Advantage programs, is administered by Schaller Anderson, an Aetna company.

CarePlus provides members with care and care management in the nursing home setting. It bundles acute, long-term care, case management, and behavioral health services. INSPIRIS nurse practitioner-led teams bring on-site care to patients in order to reduce the incidence and severity of acute care problems and to actively manage chronic illness. A pilot study of Mercy Care of Arizona enrollees found that acute inpatient hospital admissions for patients served by INSPIRIS' CarePlus program dropped 63 percent as compared to other comparable patients.

"A Best Practices Award is a strong signal to the marketplace that an organization places a premium on consumer protection and empowerment," said Alan P. Spielman, URAC's president and CEO. "We are excited about this opportunity to recognize these trailblazers and draw attention to programs that are models for the industry."

In all, URAC honored 22 winners for excellence among entries from health care management, health information technology, health plan and pharmacy benefit management organizations. Entries were judged by a distinguished panel of industry experts in three categories: consumer decision support, consumer/patient safety, and integrated care coordination. Programs were selected as winners for their ability

to measurably demonstrate an impact on consumer empowerment and/or protection, as well as their potential for wide-spread implementation of the program by other organizations.

“We are fortunate to partner with Medicare Advantage plans like Mercy Care of Arizona, whose pilot study clearly showed that on-site care and care management puts the patient at the center of care and care management,” said Mike Tudeen, president and chief executive officer of INSPIRIS. “It is a great honor to be among the first-ever winners of URAC’s Best Practices in Consumer Empowerment and Protection awards, which brings needed attention to programs providing exceptional health care management to consumers.”

“It is a real challenge for Medicaid and Medicare programs to bring ingenuity into their services for members. INSPIRIS has helped us develop better care options and paths for our most needy and fragile members,” said Tom Kelly, president and chief executive officer of Schaller Anderson. “While this award is much-appreciated, the real reward is in the results—healthier members, able to live independently.”

A complete list of winners of the Best Practices in Consumer Empowerment and Protection Awards may be found at www.urac.org.

About URAC

URAC, an independent, nonprofit organization, is well-known as a leader in promoting health care quality through its accreditation and education programs. URAC offers a wide range of quality benchmarking programs and services that keep pace with the rapid changes in the health care system, and provide a symbol of excellence for organizations to validate their commitment to quality and accountability. Through its broad-based governance structure and an inclusive standards development process, URAC ensures that all stakeholders are represented in establishing meaningful quality measures for the entire health care industry. For more information, visit www.urac.org.

About Mercy Care of Arizona

Mercy Care of Arizona, established by Carondelet Health Care Corporation of Arizona and Catholic Healthcare West, provides health care services for members of Arizona’s Medicaid and Medicare Advantage programs. It is administered by Schaller Anderson, an Aetna company.

About INSPIRIS

INSPIRIS is a unique health care management company focused on improving the quality of life for the frail elderly, chronically ill and those with disabilities, while reducing the cost to Medicare Advantage health plans. INSPIRIS partners with individual health plans to coordinate and provide care across the diverse settings where members need care, including post-acute, custodial, assisted living and hospice. For more information about INSPIRIS, visit www.inspiris.com.

For further reading about the INSPIRIS way:

http://www.inspiris.com/newsarchive/IB_20061214.pdf

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