

State Health Commissioner, Local Officials Promote Use of Patient-Centered Medical Homes During Visit to Bronx Health Center

Plan to Enroll 1 Million Medicaid Patients in Medical Homes Included in Recently Adopted State Budget

BRONX, N.Y. (April 6, 2011) – State Health Commissioner Nirav R. Shah, M.D., M.P.H., joined by federal and city leaders, highlighted New York State's new initiative to expand access to the "Medical Home" model of health care during a visit to a health center in the Bronx Wednesday.

Citing Urban Health Plan's El Nuevo San Juan Health Center as an example of a high-performing Medical Home, Commissioner Shah touted the benefits of the Medical Home model of care as part of his six-county tour in recognition of National Public Health Week. During the visit, Urban Health Plan also celebrated the opening of new clinical space that will provide care to an additional 1,000 patients.

An initiative to enroll 1 million Medicaid patients into Medical Homes was recommended by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Medicaid Redesign Team and included in the recently adopted State Budget. Health plans and providers that participate in Medical Homes will receive enhanced payments through Medicaid.

"Increasing access to the Patient-Centered Medical Home model of care will improve the health of New Yorkers and, over the long term, save money by reducing avoidable hospitalizations," said Commissioner Shah. "Medical Homes provide comprehensive, coordinated care, with greater emphasis on prevention and management of chronic diseases. By creating a better system of communication, including the sharing of medical records and patient histories, primary care and hospital providers, laboratories, pharmacists, specialists, and even social workers are able to consult with each other to determine the best health care plan for their patients."

New York currently spends \$1.4 billion annually on avoidable hospitalizations – the highest in the nation.

Commissioner Shah was joined by U.S. Health and Human Services Region 2 Director Jaime Torres; New York City Health Commissioner Thomas Farley, M.D., M.P.H.; Urban Health Plan President and CEO Paloma Hernandez, M.P.H., and representatives of the Community Health Center Association of NYS (CHCANYS) and the Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC).

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"The Medical Homes initiative puts a premium on the health care services that keep people healthy and prevent costly hospitalizations," said New York City Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley. "We're pleased to be working with health care providers and the State Department of Health on increasing the number of Medical Homes and the quality of care that we offer in New York City."

Urban Health Plan President and CEO Paloma Hernandez said, "As a recognized level 3 Physician Practice Connections – Patient-Centered Medical Home, Urban knows first-hand the importance of providing coordinated care that focuses on disease prevention and management. We were using the medical home model before the term even existed."

CHCANYS CEO Elizabeth Swain said, "Investing in this model of care, as New York State has, is key to reforming our primary care delivery system in these very difficult times. The medical home model of care that is exemplified by Urban Health Plan's El Nuevo San Juan Health Center will improve the health and wellbeing of the patient and the community, and save resources at the same time."

Daniel Lowenstein, director of External Affairs for PCDC said, "Governor Cuomo's plan to expand patient-centered medical homes for 1 million New Yorkers can improve the health of patients and communities and reduce health care costs. Transforming into a true medical home like the Urban Health Plan takes steadfast commitment and effort, and we look forward to working with Dr. Shah, his team, and New York's primary care providers to meet this challenge."

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