

July 31, 2009

Peter Phelps
Director of
Marketing Services
(269) 966-8131

IHP and BCHS receive Kellogg Foundation grant

The Calhoun County Pathways to Health initiative, created by Integrated Health Partners (IHP) and Battle Creek Health System in 2006 has received a \$98,000 grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation. This three-year funding supports the continued change of health care delivery in Calhoun County.

The grant dollars will continue to help physician practices to learn from national experts on how to create a patient-centered health care system. The practices will participate in a yearlong learning collaborative that will help them redesigning their approaches to providing health care.

“This team-based approach encourages patients to be actively involved in their care,” says Dr. Mary Ellen Benzik, medical director of IHP. “In addition to individual physician practices, caregivers across the health care continuum will be able to improve the patient-focused process from one health care provider or setting to another.”

The crisis in chronic diseases impacts all of our lives. In Calhoun County, 10% of adults are diabetic, with an additional 40% pre-diabetic. In addition, more than 70% of residents in Calhoun County are overweight or obese. This leads to significant complications, as well as premature death. Our racial and ethnic minority populations are impacted to a greater degree leading to significant health care disparities in our community. In addition to impacting our quality of life, these health statistics increase the cost of care, decrease the ability for successful employment, and impact the well being of our community.

“These challenging health issues are further complicated by a broken health care delivery system,” adds Ruth Clark, executive director of IHP. “The Calhoun County Pathways to Health initiative is a multi-stakeholder endeavor to transform the delivery of health care in our community. This change in health care will lead to improved health, decreased cost and hospitalizations, and decreased complications from chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.”

Integrated Health Partners, a joint venture between Calhoun County Physicians Organization, Inc. and Battle Creek Health System, has been working to improve health care quality since 1995. Calhoun County Pathways to Health works to engage patients and health care providers to find solutions to local health care challenges. This initiative has received national awards and recognition for its innovative community collaborative solution to the complex issues of health care in our country.

“What they’re doing in Calhoun County is truly inspirational,” says Dr. Tom Simmer, senior vice president and chief medical officer of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. “They have ambitiously created a program that does more than improve primary care practice, it truly transforms it.”

If you would like more information on the Calhoun County Pathways to Health initiative, please contact Ruth Clark or Mary Ellen Benzik, MD, at Integrated Health Partners, (269) 660-3850.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation was established in 1930. The organization supports children, families, and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society. For further information, please visit the Foundation’s website at www.wkkf.org.

Battle Creek Health System, sponsored by two parent organizations--Trinity Health (the fourth largest Catholic health system in the U.S. with 21 hospitals, 9 nursing homes, 19 senior house facilities, 8 home health care agencies, and 4 hospices in Michigan alone) and BCHS Community Partners, is accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Battle Creek Health System, a member of the Mercy Cancer Network, is a recipient of the 2008 HealthGrades Orthopaedic Surgery Excellence Award™ and 2009 Five Star rated for joint replacement surgery and total knee replacement. HealthGrades is a leading health care information company that provides objective ‘report card’ ratings nationwide. BCHS provides excellent health care for the community and promotes wellness for the whole person with access and compassion for all. For the latest medical information, visit the BCHS web site at www.bchealth.com or call the BCHS Marketing Department at (269) 966-8132.