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### **BCHS initiative receives Trinity awards**

The current national debate about how to deal with poor health outcomes and fragmentation of care coupled with an ever-escalating cost is an issue vital to the future of health care in America. While the discussion often focuses on national solutions, the importance of grass roots action is vital to bringing about change.

One of the few national success stories was recently recognized as a model for other communities. Battle Creek Health System received two awards from Trinity Health at its fall conference-- Outstanding Achievement in Support of Community Benefit Ministry and Outstanding Achievement in Support of Physician Alignment. Both awards are based upon a BCHS chronic care model called 'Pathways to Health.'

In the 1990s a group of physicians created a care plan based upon the premise that many at-risk patients were not having optimum outcomes to their acute illnesses. They also discovered that the processes that physicians had been using were not as effective as they could be in terms of following the patient from 'initial visit through treatment.'

Those preliminary care plans were updated and refined by a group of Calhoun County health care providers. For the past two years, community stakeholders have been meeting to address the challenges in health care in the county. They include employers, insurers, physicians, patients, and community support networks that are working side by side to improve the delivery of health care in the county.

"As most can attest, the transformation of health care is not an easy thing to fix," says Ruth Clark, executive director of Integrated Health Partners (IHP), a group that has been leading the local effort. "It can be compared to repairing an airplane while flying at 10,000 feet! Several pacesetting physicians who took on this challenge in the last year reported their outcomes in May."

"The management of chronic care diseases is becoming a major component of primary health care providers," says Dr. Mary Ellen Benzik, medical director IHP. "In addition to physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants are particularly well qualified for chronic disease management due to their ability to address the multi-faceted nature of chronic problems. For this to be a success, it must be a total team effort—the clinicians *and* the patient."

The 'Pathways' model focuses on developing informed patients who work more closely with proactive practice teams of health care physicians. The initiative emphasizes four major system change components for delivering better care to the chronically ill:

- Leveraging the use of community resources and allied health care providers, such as nurses and health educators.
- Involving and motivating patients and families to help self-manage their chronic conditions.
- Redesigning the delivery of care to improve services for the chronically ill.
- Encouraging health systems to operate with explicit guidelines or protocols and use up-to-date clinical information systems.

In addition to the Trinity awards, the Calhoun County 'Pathways' initiative was recognized nationally earlier this year by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI).

If you would like to learn more about this initiative, please contact Integrated Health Partners (IHP) at (269) 660-3850.

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 is a recipient of the 2008 HealthGrades Orthopaedic Surgery Excellence Award™. 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](http://www.bchealth.com) or call the BCHS Marketing Department at (269) 966-8132.