

PROGRESS *in* Health

America's Health Insurers Working Together to Improve the Health Care Experience

VOLUME 1 NUMBER ONE

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Feedback From Physicians

Earlier this year, the American Medical Association released a statement welcoming the initiatives put forward by CAQH aimed at lessening administrative hassles for physicians. "We are pleased that insurers recognize the incredible administrative burdens placed on physicians who participate in multiple health plans and must adhere to varying requirements from numerous insurers. Physicians will particularly benefit from a single credentialing process and from easily accessible formulary databases," said Randolph D. Smoak, M.D., AMA president. "We want these initiatives to move forward so administrative hassles for patients and physicians can be significantly reduced and physicians can get back to their first priority: taking care of patients."

Ask The Expert

Robert Scalettar, M.D., talks about antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

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Working Together to Preserve Antibiotic Power

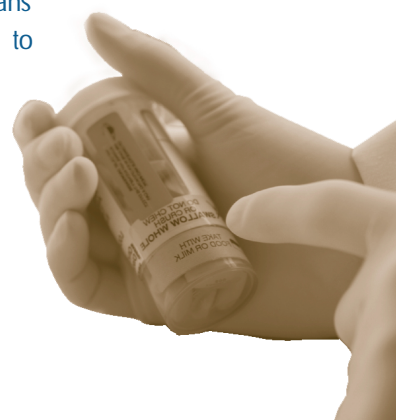
Health Plans and CDC launch Save Antibiotic Strength program

Physician offices and emergency rooms crowded with patients complaining of congestion, sore throat and fever – and requesting antibiotics. It's a scenario doctors face repeatedly, both during the peak of allergy season and again in cold and flu season.

While public knowledge of the problem of antibiotic resistance has increased in recent years, many patients remain unaware of the differences between viral and bacterial infections. This confusion causes them to ask their doctors for what patients think works best: a strong dose of antibiotics. Patients may request a specific antibiotic they were prescribed in the past or simply refuse to accept the proper prescription of fluids and rest. This pattern, repeated throughout many years, has resulted in what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified as the growing public health threat of germs that resist antibiotics.

The Coalition for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH), a group of 26 of America's largest health plans and insurers and their trade associations, has joined the CDC in the fight to preserve the power of antibiotics. Save Antibiotic Strength is a program to educate Americans about the threat of antibiotic resistance and to arm physicians with the information and tools they need to appropriately use antibiotics.

Continued on page 4



From the Chairman's Desk



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of *Progress In Health*. The members of the Coalition for Affordable Quality Healthcare are pleased to be able to share our progress with you as we work to improve the health care experience for more than 100 million Americans and their doctors.

Two years ago, the nation's largest health plans and insurers joined together to strengthen the American health care system. Today, our membership stands at 26. Although we operate in a highly competitive environment, we remain committed to working together over the long term in order to improve the health care experience for patients and their doctors.

Our premise is that actions speak louder than words. In this issue you will find evidence that the hard work of the CAQH committees is paying off with the successful launch of the Save Antibiotic Strength campaign and the significant steps taken towards reducing administrative paperwork for physicians.

CAQH is particularly pleased to be working in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and to have the participation of other national organizations such as the Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine. We know that saving the strength of antibiotics requires cooperation and partnership with many in the health care community and CAQH is working to be a part of the solution.

Look for future updates of CAQH activities and accomplishments in *Progress In Health* and visit www.CAQH.org for more information.

Thank you for your interest and commitment to improving quality health care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonard Schaeffer". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Leonard Schaeffer
Chairman

Spending Time on Patients, Not Paperwork

Leading health plans pledge to bring added convenience to physicians

One of the most time-consuming tasks physicians and their office staffs have to face is the process and paperwork associated with credentialing; yet it is an important component of assuring quality care. The Coalition for Quality Affordable Healthcare (CAQH) is taking steps to eliminate the complex array of credentialing applications and re-credentialing requirements.

CAQH's members, 26 of America's largest health plans and their associations, have all agreed to use a standard credentialing application and a common database of provider information maintained by one vendor on a national basis, ensuring that each practitioner submits just one credentialing application, to one source, to meet the needs of all health plans participating in the CAQH effort. Each CAQH health plan will then make its own independent credentialing and contracting determination, using the database of provider information.

"CAQH decided to focus on helping to eliminate the hassles physicians face associated with the credentialing process as a first step towards making administration easier," says Jay Gellert, president and chief executive officer, Health Net, and chair of the CAQH Administrative Simplification Committee.

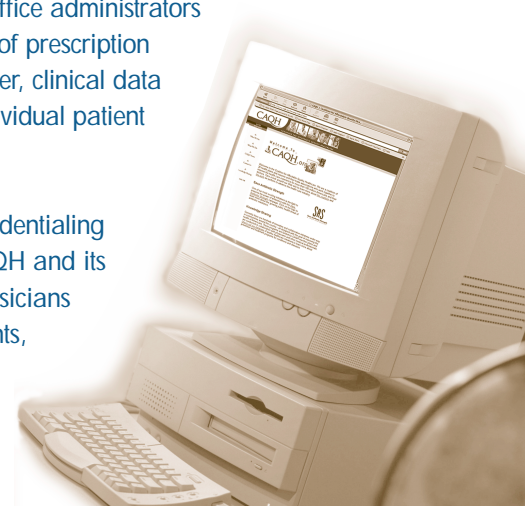
In establishing a common form, CAQH reviewed more than 40 credentialing applications, including standard credentialing applications adopted by several states. The coalition

recognizes that there are a number of states that have a standard credentialing application in use, and will incorporate those applications into the common database. The credentialing forms will be updated quarterly to maintain the information in a perpetual state of readiness.

The credentialing application data collection process is intended to be through the Internet wherever possible, with fax or mail options available for physicians who are unable or choose not to access the system online. The coalition will encourage involvement from health plans that are not CAQH members, to help further eliminate redundancies in paperwork for physicians.

In addition to credentialing, CAQH wants to make other systems and processes easier for doctors and patients. The next step in this effort is to develop a central database of health plan formularies. Through the "one-stop shop" doctors and office administrators will have access to the list of prescription drugs that CAQH plans cover, clinical data related to the drugs and individual patient formulary coverage.

For more information on credentialing or to learn more about CAQH and its continuing work to help physicians spend more time with patients, visit www.CAQH.org.



Ask the Expert

With Robert Scalettar, M.D., Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Q:

Which bacteria are demonstrating an increased resistance to antibiotics?

A:

Many bacteria, including the species that cause pneumonia and other respiratory tract infections, meningitis and sexually transmitted diseases, are becoming increasingly resistant to the antimicrobial drugs used to treat them. According to the CDC, examples of microbes that are rapidly developing resistance to available antimicrobials include:

- *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumonia, ear infections and meningitis)
- *Staphylococcus aureus* (skin, bone, lung and bloodstream infections)
- *Escherichia coli* (urinary tract infections)
- *Salmonella* (foodborne infections)
- *Enterococci* and *Klebsiella spp* (infections transmitted in health care settings)

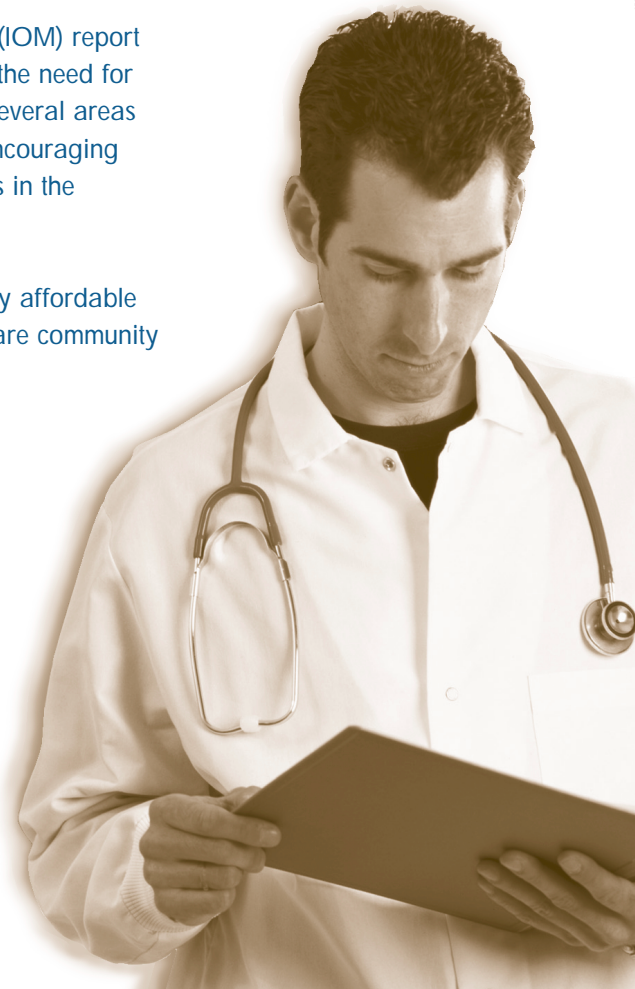
Monitoring, preventing and controlling antibiotic resistance requires a commitment and collaboration among many groups in the public and private sectors, including the general public.

Ensuring Quality Care

Earlier this year, CAQH applauded the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report "Crossing the Quality Chasm." The IOM report highlighted the need for continuing quality improvements, and CAQH is working in several areas where the IOM suggests solutions can be found, including encouraging closer cooperation among providers, health plans and others in the health care system.

"CAQH shares the IOM's goal of expanding access to quality affordable health care and recognizes that every corner of the health care community is affected by these issues," said Sam Ho, M.D., corporate medical director, PacifiCare Health Systems, Inc., who is featured in the IOM report. "We all have a role to play in the improvement of quality of care, including physicians, employers and health plans. That's why CAQH is reaching out to these groups through exciting initiatives such as the Save Antibiotic Strength campaign and the knowledge sharing database of disease and condition management programs."

To learn more, visit the IOM Web site at www.IOM.edu or the CAQH Web site at www.CAQH.org.



For more information on CAQH please visit
www.CAQH.org

CAQH launched the Save Antibiotic Strength effort with a national dialogue in Washington, D.C., bringing together physicians from health plans, medical specialty societies and government health organizations to address a problem that results in nearly two American deaths each hour, according to the World Health Organization.

"The widespread prescribing of antibiotics when they are not needed not only exposes patients to unnecessary side effects but also fosters the emergence of antibiotic-resistant strains of infectious agents," said John W. Rowe, M.D., chairman, president and chief executive officer of Aetna, who kicked off the Washington, D.C. event. "This leads to weakening of our defenses against increasingly powerful infections. As a physician, I know it is essential that health plans work together with America's physicians and leading public health officials to provide educational information to patients who are asking for antibiotics."

The Save Antibiotic Strength program combines its educational outreach with measurement of specific indicators that will evaluate the program's impact. Three specific locations have been chosen: San Diego, Calif., Norfolk, Va., and the state of Connecticut. In these areas, CAQH has selected the treatment of pharyngitis as the key measure of appropriate treatment of infections.

Together with the CDC, CAQH will help to get the word out to consumers about the risks posed by antibiotic resistance. Through collaborations with local health departments, medical schools and professional societies and associations, CAQH will share information and promote appropriate antibiotic use. In addition, advertising and a radio media tour of medical directors will be deployed to increase the reach of the Save Antibiotic Strength educational message.

For doctors and other health care practitioners, CAQH will disseminate clinical treatment guidelines, which include the latest information on treatment of choice for upper respiratory infections as established by the CDC and other clinical groups. Reference material will also be made available, including informative patient handouts and educational posters for office reception areas.

"It is essential that health plans work together with America's physicians and leading public health officials to provide educational information to patients who are asking for antibiotics."

- John W. Rowe, M.D.

"CAQH member companies recognize that sometimes we can be most effective in local communities where we can help solve public health issues by working closely with local physician organizations, public health officials and others," said Tom Snead, chairman and chief executive officer of Trigon Healthcare, in Richmond, Va., which has a pilot program underway in Norfolk. "As we've seen in Virginia, these partnerships can help us understand and solve pressing public health problems together."

To read more about the Save Antibiotic Strength campaign visit www.CAQH.org.

Experts Promote Appropriate Antibiotic Use

On April 17, CAQH launched the Save Antibiotic Strength campaign with a national dialogue in Washington, D.C. Representatives from health plans, medical societies, employer groups, hospitals and professional medical associations turned out in support of the initiative and to hear from a distinguished panel, including representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics, American Association of Family Practitioners, American Academy of Pediatrics and American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine.

"The APUA, like the CDC, has been interested in working with physicians in trying to understand what their problems are and what can be done to help them improve antibiotic use," said Thomas O'Brien, M.D., vice president, Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics.

"The 20th century brought us the greatest medical discovery, antibiotics. It's now up to us to decide if the 21st century will be the end of the antibiotic era," said Richard Besser, M.D., Division of Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases, CDC.

"This initiative is great and I hope over the next few years that CAQH expands this project. I look forward to working together on this project."

Richard Roberts, M.D., president, AAFP, shared his support for the Save Antibiotic Strength campaign, stating, "What this initiative is attempting to do is to get the truth, the whole story, out to folks, and for that I am very happy to be a part of this."

To view the Webcast of the event, visit www.CAQH.org.



Save Antibiotic Strength
A CAQH PARTNERSHIP

ANTIBIOTICS

Miracle Drug? Yes.
Solution to every illness? No.



Ask your doctor about how you can prevent
antibiotic resistance.



Save Antibiotic Strength brings America's largest health plans and insurers representing more than 100 million Americans together with The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help fight antibiotic resistance.

CAQH Members In Action

CAQH Key Initiatives

As part of the coalition-wide effort to improve the health care experience, CAQH members have pledged to support and implement a series of achievable, concrete actions steps, including:

- Improving access to quality health care coverage - by assuring that all managed health insurance products offered by our plans now provide access to obstetricians/gynecologists and pediatricians, coverage for emergency care, and external review systems by independent medical professionals, among other benefits.
- Working with doctors and other health advocates to help them improve health care quality - by sharing information on quality health care practices and helping educate Americans about health behaviors and treatments.
- Making administration and information easier for doctors and consumers - by identifying ways to simplify processes and improve information.

Members

Aetna
American Association of Health Plans
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield
AultCare
Beech Street Corporation
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
BlueCross and BlueShield of North Carolina
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield
CIGNA
ConnectiCare, Inc.
Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield
FirstHealth
Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Company
Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound
Health Insurance Association of America
Health Net, Inc.
HealthPartners
Highmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield
Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey
Independence Blue Cross
MultiPlan, Inc.
Mutual of Omaha
Oxford Health Plans
PacifiCare Health Systems Inc.
Private Healthcare Systems, Inc.
RightCHOICE Managed Care, Inc.
The Regence Group
Trigon Healthcare, Inc.
WellPoint Health Networks Inc.

New Chairman Inaugurated

H. Edward Hanway, president and chief executive officer of CIGNA, will be inaugurated as the next CAQH Chairman at the Annual Meeting. Hanway will succeed Leonard Schaeffer of WellPoint Health Networks, Inc.

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The Coalition for Affordable Quality Healthcare



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