Oregon Personal Health Records Led by Northwest Physicians Insurance Company

Liability Insurance Reductions to Physicians for Improved Patient Communication & Safety

Portland, OR (Vocus) February 15, 2008 -- Today, Northwest Physicians Insurance Company (NPIC), one of Oregon’s largest medical liability carriers and a subsidiary of The Doctors Company, announced a new initiative to improve patient safety and patient-physician communication using personal health records (PHR) and secure email. Under this new program, the 2600 NPIC-insured physicians will receive patient safety points for connecting online with their patients using the online iHealth PHR service.

“We feel strongly that improved patient-practice communication can lead to enhanced patient safety, improved documentation and a more informed and educated patient, all contributing to reduced professional liability,” explained Dieter Zimmer, Vice President Patient Safety and Practice Support for NPIC. “We are seeing increased market demand for these types of online services and we want to help our insured physicians adopt and use these tools to better and more efficiently connect with patients.”

The iHealth service includes a practice web site for physicians as well as integrated, interactive secure email and patient PHRs. The service also includes automated patient education and safety messages for patients, including same-day patient notification if their medicines are subject to FDA recall or warnings.

“We are thrilled to be working with NPIC to expand online patient-practice communication in Oregon and Idaho,” noted Edward Fotsch, MD, CEO of Medem Inc., which provides the iHealth service. “Despite many efforts nationally to better engage patients using PHRs and the Internet, real uptake has been very slow. Physicians have proven to be the key to actually connecting online with patients, and NPIC’s iHealth program is exactly the catalyst needed to move the patient-physician relationship online in Oregon and Idaho.”

The NPIC iHealth program is available immediately to physicians in Oregon and Idaho, and Northwest Physicians Insurance and Medem are also collaborating to expand the program to additional partners including area health plans and hospitals. The iHealth service is available for NPIC physicians at a discount as part of the initiative and costs physicians less than a dollar per day for the practice web site and all interactive features. Additionally, patient safety points directly impact premium credits for physicians who use the service, and are based upon a percentage of the total paid annual premiums.

For more information about iHealth patient-physician communication services, visit www.medem.com.

About Northwest Physicians Insurance Company
Northwest Physicians Mutual Insurance Company (NPM) was founded by Oregon physicians and has been providing quality service and insurance products to physicians in the Northwest since 1983. Northwest Physicians Insurance Company (NPIC) will continue the traditions of NPM enhanced by the financial strength and expertise of The Doctors Company. NPIC insures physicians and their associated practices in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. The company is committed to developing opportunities, responding to change, improving patient safety, and growing in the dynamic health care field.

About iHealth
iHealth is a suite of integrated Web-based services proven to effectively engage patients in better managing their health. Powered by Medem, this comprehensive physician-patient communication resource includes the leading patient-owned and standards-based Personal Health Record (PHR), which provides a secure vehicle for communicating online with healthcare providers and is interoperable with EHRs, health plans, pharmacies and other health systems. iHealth’s online registration process also eliminates the medical clipboard, while patient-specific education, care management programs, FDA warnings and Health Risk Assessment tools improve the quality of information across the continuum of care. Founded by the American Medical Association and several national medical specialty societies, iHealth is supported by a broad constituency of industry partners, 45 medical societies, patient advocacy groups and government agencies. To learn more about iHealth, visit www.medem.com.

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