



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2012

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National quality standards met

CareOregon health plans achieve NCQA accreditation

Portland—The National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA) has awarded Commendable accreditation to CareOregon Health Plan and CareOregon Advantage Plus Medicare Advantage plan.

CareOregon is the largest Medicaid MCO in Oregon, managing care for nearly 160,000 Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members, about a quarter of the OHP membership. CareOregon Advantage Plus HMO-POS is a special needs plan, coordinating care for about 6,000 members who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid.

“We’re very pleased to earn NCQA Commendable accreditation,” said Margaret Rowland, MD, CareOregon Chief Medical Officer. “Accreditation is a validation of the work we have been doing at CareOregon to provide better care for Oregonians, regardless of their social circumstances.”

CareOregon Health Plan is the first Medicaid plan in Oregon to receive NCQA accreditation. The CareOregon Advantage plan is one of five accredited Medicare plans in the state. There are three levels of accreditation: Accredited, Commendable and Excellent, the highest level.

“Achieving an accreditation status of Commendable from NCQA is a sign that a health plan is serious about quality,” says Margaret E. O’Kane, NCQA president. “It is awarded to plans whose service and clinical quality meet or exceed NCQA’s rigorous requirements for consumer protection and quality improvement.”

Accreditation follows a voluntary process of evaluating quality of care and customer service. NCQA accreditation is more comprehensive and specific than other health plan accreditations because NCQA verifies scores and publicly reports results in five categories:

- *Access and Service*—Do health plan members have access to the care and service they need?
- *Qualified Providers*—Does the health plan assess each doctor’s qualifications and what PPO plan members say about its providers?
- *Staying Healthy*—Does the health plan offer activities to help members maintain good health and detect illness early?
- *Getting Better*—Does the health plan offer programs and activities for members to help them recover from an illness?

- *Living with Illness*—Does the health plan care offer programs and activities for members with chronic conditions to help them manage their chronic illness?

Gaining NCQA accreditation and keeping it requires continuous improvement and better value per health care dollar.

“The application process helped formalize the quality improvement process we already had in place,” Dr. Rowland said. “And that helps us continue our efforts to transform health care and make it more affordable, produce better outcomes and be a better experience for our members.”

The accreditation process evaluates how well the health plan manages all parts of its delivery system—physicians, hospitals, other providers and administrative services.

The years-long process includes rigorous, on-site and off-site evaluations, using information from health plan records, consumer surveys, interviews with plan staff and performance on selected HEDIS® and CAHPS® measures.

- HEDIS—the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set—is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance. HEDIS is a tool used by more than 90 percent of America’s health plans to measure performance on important dimensions of care and service, including preventive care, chronic care management measures and treatment outcomes.
- CAHPS—the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems—is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). CAHPS Health Plan Survey is the national standard for measuring and reporting on the experiences of consumers with their health plans.

An NCQA team of physicians and health plan experts conducts the accreditation surveys, which are analyzed by a national oversight committee of physicians. The oversight committee assigns an accreditation level based on the performance level of each plan being evaluated.

CareOregon’s Commendable accreditation must be renewed in three years.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Jeanie Lunsford.

CareOregon is a non-profit health plan that serves Oregonians with Medicare and Medicaid, including about one-quarter of Oregon Health Plan participants. Its mission is to help all Oregonians have quality health care. CareOregon works with its members and its network of providers so members can live healthier lives and have high-quality, affordable, effective health care whenever they need it, now and in the future. For more information, see <http://www.careoregon.org>.

NCQA is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. NCQA accredits and certifies a wide range of health care organizations. It also recognizes clinicians and practices in key areas of performance. NCQA is committed to providing health care quality information for consumers, purchasers, health care providers and researchers. <http://www.ncqa.org>.