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Expert to Address Growing Crisis in Caregiving
UPMC Health Plan Marks National Caregiving Month with Talk by Richard Schulz

PITTSBURGH (October 22, 2009) – The demand for at-home caregiving will increase dramatically in the United States in the years ahead, said Richard Schulz, PhD, an internationally known expert on caregiving from the University of Pittsburgh.

“Caregiving is a major public health issue in the U.S.,” said Dr. Schulz. “Family caregivers are a critical component of the health care system in the U.S., yet their role and importance to society as a whole has only recently been appreciated.”

November is National Family Caregivers Month, and UPMC Health Plan will mark the event on Nov. 4 by serving as host for a special lecture by Dr. Schulz, who is the director of the University Center for Social and Urban Research at Pitt and associate director of the University of Pittsburgh Institute on Aging. Dr. Schulz, a professor of psychiatry, has focused most of his research on the effects of disabling late-life illnesses on patients and their families.

With the aging of the baby boomer generation, the demand for care will increase dramatically. At the same time, the availability of family caregivers will decrease because baby boomers had fewer children than their parents did. “The costs of formal care and support are already too high and are unsustainable,” said Dr. Schulz. “There is also a growing shortfall of health care professionals with relevant experience. Important research and policy issues need to be addressed before we move forward.”

National Family Caregivers Month, an annual event created by the National Family Caregivers Association, is designed to recognize, thank, support, educate, and empower family caregivers.

For the past two years, UPMC Health Plan has offered a class for members, titled “Powerful Tools for Caregivers.” The class, which is conducted by trained employee volunteers, is designed to support the efforts of persons who are responsible for caring for a family member or other loved one. The six-week training session teaches caregivers how to care for their own needs while also serving as caregivers.

Much of Dr. Schulz’s recent work has focused on issues of family caregiving. He is currently the principal investigator in a 10-year study on the health effects of caregiving on married couples. In recognition of his contributions to research on aging, he was the recipient of the Kleemeier Award in 2000 from the Gerontological Society of America.

“Our research has shown that two-thirds of married couples who are caregivers deal with a high degree of depression and stress,” said Dr. Schulz. “Family caregiving is a burdensome role with potentially high costs to the caregiver.”

Dr. Schulz’s lecture is scheduled for Nov. 4 at 10 a.m. in the Herberman Conference Center at UPMC Shadyside. The lecture is free and open to the public.

“We are honored to have someone of Dr. Schulz’s stature to talk about the issue of caregiving,” said Diane P. Holder, President and CEO of UPMC Health Plan. “Caregiving is an important issue in today’s society and it will only become even more important in the years ahead.”

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About UPMC Health Plan

UPMC Health Plan, the second-largest health insurer in western Pennsylvania, is owned by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), one of the nation’s top-ranked health systems. The integrated partner companies of the UPMC Insurance Services Division – which includes UPMC Health Plan, UPMC Work Partners, *LifeSolutions* (EAP), *UPMC for You* (Medical Assistance), and Community Care Behavioral Health – offer a full range of group health insurance, Medicare, Special Needs, CHIP, Medical Assistance, behavioral health, employee assistance, and workers’ compensation products and services to nearly 1.3 million members. Our

local provider network includes UPMC as well as community providers, totaling more than 80 hospitals and more than 7,600 physicians in a 29-county region. For more information, visit www.upmchealthplan.com.