

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

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UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care Approved for Major Research Award

Center Among the First in the Nation to Earn Comparative Effectiveness Research Award from PCORI

PITTSBURGH (January 3, 2013) – Filling the unmet medical needs of adults with serious mental illness is the goal of a pilot program from the UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care, which has been approved for a research award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI).

The Center for High-Value Health Care, which is housed under the UPMC Insurance Services Division, was one of 25 health-related agencies approved for funding from PCORI to advance that organization’s mission of helping people “make informed health care decisions, and improve health care delivery and outcomes, by producing and promoting high integrity, evidence-based information that comes from research guided by patients, caregivers and the broader health care community.”

James Schuster, Chief Medical Officer for Community Care Behavioral Health, which is also part of the UPMC Insurance Services Division, is the principal investigator for the project, titled, “Optimizing Behavioral Health Homes by Focusing on Outcomes that Matter Most for Adults with Serious Mental Illness.”

The Center sought \$1.7 million in funding under PCORI’s Improving Healthcare Systems research initiative. The program will test two promising ways to promote the health, wellness, and recovery of adults with serious mental illness. One will help patients manage their care through a web-based portal and peer support and the other through interactions with nurses during clinic visits. Nearly 3,000 Medicaid-enrolled adults who

are at risk for chronic medical conditions and receive care at rural community mental health centers, will be targeted for participation.

“While there are proven strategies that can prevent and manage significant medical conditions that are common among adults with serious mental illness, providers need a better understanding of how to shape and deliver these interventions so that they can effectively support the outcomes that matter most to patients,” said Dr. Schuster.

Dr. Schuster’s co-investigators on the project are Charles Reynolds, a professor of Geriatric Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh, and Tracey Carney, Director of Recovery Central Clubhouse at Columbia Montour Snyder Union Counties of the Central Pennsylvania Service System.

The UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care is dedicated to working with patients, providers, payers, and other stakeholders to improve health care quality and efficiency as well as the overall health of the population.

To secure funding, the Center worked with Community Care, its mental health provider partners in the North Central Region of Pennsylvania, the Behavioral Health Association of Rural Pennsylvania, the University of Pittsburgh’s Department of Psychiatry, and the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public Health.

“Securing funding of this kind is what our center was created to do,” said Donna Keyser, Senior Director for the UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care. “This program will inform positive health choices and also key stakeholder decision making to support those choices, which will help to advance health system improvement efforts.”

The award was part of \$40.7 million in funding that PCORI is committing to 25 projects across the country and were approved by its Board of Governors following a competitive multi-stage review process involving scientists, patients, caregivers and other stakeholders. All awards were approved pending a business and programmatic review by PCORI staff and completion of a final award agreement.

An independent, non-profit research institute established two years ago as part of federal health care reform legislation, PCORI is authorized by the U.S. Congress to fund comparative clinical effectiveness research to provide patients and their caregivers the best prevention, treatment and care information.

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About UPMC Health Plan

UPMC Health Plan, the second-largest health insurer in western Pennsylvania, is owned by 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 WorkPartners, *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 1.9 million members. Our local provider network includes UPMC as well as community providers, totaling more than 125 hospitals and more than 11,500 physicians throughout Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio, West Virginia, and Maryland. For more information, visit www.upmchealthplan.com.

About UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care

The UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care is dedicated to translating the innovative work of UPMC into evidence-based practice and policy change for improving the quality and efficiency of U.S. health care. UPMC is a global health enterprise and one of the nation's largest integrated delivery and financing systems. UPMC is a top provider of medical care and, through its UPMC Insurance Services Division, the company provides health care insurance services, behavioral health services, and a range of employee solutions such as employee assistance programs. Through the Center, UPMC and the Insurance Services Division expect to advance the boundaries of efficient system-wide solutions for important health care challenges in our region and across the nation. For more information, visit <http://www.upmchighvaluehealthcare.com>.

About the UPMC Insurance Services Division

The integrated partner companies of the UPMC Insurance Services Division include UPMC Health Plan, *UPMC for Life*, *UPMC for You*, UPMC Community Care, *UPMC for Kids*, Community Care Behavioral Health, UPMC WorkPartners, *LifeSolutions*, *EBenefits Solutions*, and *Askesis Development Group*. The UPMC Insurance Services Division offers a full range of insurance programs and products to more than 2 million members.

About Community Care

Community Care, a nonprofit, tax-exempt recovery-focused behavioral health managed care organization headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania manages mental health and substance use disorder services for approximately 700,000 Medical Assistance recipients in Pennsylvania. Community Care also serves as the behavioral health organization for the Hudson River Region of New York State. Part of UPMC, Community Care was incorporated in 1996 with a mission to improve the health and well-being of the community through the delivery of effective and accessible behavioral health services.

About PCORI

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is an independent, non-profit organization authorized by Congress. Its mission is to fund research that will provide patients, their caregivers and clinicians with the evidence-based information needed to make better-informed health care decisions. PCORI is committed to continuously seeking input from a broad range of stakeholders to guide its work.