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New Jersey Primary Care Association, Inc.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 21, 2011

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**New Jersey Primary Care Association Statewide  
Patient-Centered Medical Home Initiative**

**The New Jersey Primary Care Association (NJPCA)** is a non-profit corporation that represents the organizational providers and affiliates of community-based ambulatory health care statewide.

In the State of New Jersey, the major providers of comprehensive community-based primary health care are the 20 community health centers and their satellite sites, federally funded/qualified by Sections 330/329 of the United States Public Health Service. Located in Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Salem, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties, the FQHCs provide much needed care to the most impoverished citizens in the state. Although somewhat different in composition and in the nature of services offered, the FQHCs all target the health care needs of the medically underserved within their respective service areas. Approximately 1,300,000 patient visits are made annually to New Jersey's FQHCs by more than 429,000 users. Typical services include internal medicine, obstetrics, gynecology, pediatrics, geriatrics, medical and surgical sub-specialties, laboratory, podiatry, pharmacy, x-ray, dental, and mental health services.

In an effort to create a more primary care-focused system, with better health outcomes, lower costs, and increased satisfaction for both patients and staff, NJPCA is working with several different federal and local government agencies to promote the concepts of the ***Patient-Centered Medical Home model statewide.***

The Patient Centered Medical Home is not a building or a facility. It is a model of care that emphasizes coordinated, comprehensive healthcare that focuses on the individual needs of each patient. It's a delivery care model that provides what patients need, when they need it, and in a manner that they want it. Care is coordinated, patients and providers work as partners and the right people are talking to each other.

Patient registries, information technology and health information exchanges help to ensure that the patient gets the care they need and want. Federal standards and quality measures for Meaningful Use of EHRs and Patient-Centered Medical Homes, adopted and effectively used by health care providers will help support improvement in health care quality and outcomes.

Thousands of practices across the country are working to change the way they deliver healthcare by transforming their systems of care. Many have implemented the NCQA's Patient-Centered Medical Home model to help in that transition.

The benefits to achieving PCMH recognition include, but are not limited to improvements in quality of care and patient experience and access. In addition, reductions in costs related to preventable and unnecessary care (i.e. ER visits and hospital stays) can be realized. The model also reinforces incentives for meaningful use (HIT).

The **National Committee for Quality Assurance** (NCQA) is an independent non-profit organization designed to improve health care quality. It manages voluntary accreditation and recognition programs for individual physicians and medical groups. Its mission is to improve the quality of health care.

The NJPCA Clinical Program Director and the Meaningful Use Project Director are working together, in a team approach, to assist NJ FQHCs in their efforts to become "Meaningful Users" and to achieve recognized Patient-Centered Medical Home status. Technical support provided by NJPCA for these initiatives help the state's Community Health Centers enhance care coordination, patient experiences and quality care. According to **Linda Whitfield-Spinner, NJPCA Clinical Quality Program Director**, "PCMH is an ideal model of care delivery that will help our health centers provide the type of health care New Jersey residents deserve."

In New Jersey eight FQHCs have begun the NCQA PCMH recognition process. Transforming traditional healthcare systems and developing a patient-centered medical home culture within the organization involve true commitment, strong senior leadership and a great deal of resources. This transition requires major changes in operations and workflows.

NJ health centers have established interdisciplinary teams and have begun to survey their practices to determine readiness for PCMH status. They are completing system and workflow assessments and looking for opportunities to improve delivery of care and implement workflow redesign. The centers are using the Care and Improvement Models to improve quality of healthcare, access and patient communication.

"Patient Centered Medical Home defines all of the qualities people value about health services: convenience, accessibility, comprehensive one stop service; evidence based methods of care; continuity in treatment and in the patient information connecting collaborating care givers; and all the thoroughness of care received in a warm, hospitable setting where you are listened to and treated as a valued guest. What's not to like about the standards of a Patient Center Medical Home," said **Gil Walter President/CEO of CompleteCare Health Network** (Cape May, Cumberland & Gloucester Counties).

NJ Health Centers seeking NCQA PCMH recognition are being supported by NJPCA which provides technical support and coaching around the NCQA PCMH standards and requirements via site visits, webinars and face-to-face collaborative educational trainings.

**Our goal is to have all eight health centers work toward PCMH recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance and achieve at least Level 1 within a year.**

The old fee-for-service system does not effectively support the concepts for PCMH. NJPCA is looking to work with partners that will make incentives available to the organizations that achieve NCQA recognition. Some health plans pay higher reimbursements to PCMH practices that work to avoid unnecessary hospital charges for chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, and congestive heart failure.

To learn more about the NJPCA PCMH Initiative contact: Linda Whitfield-Spinner at [lwspinner@njpca.org](mailto:lwspinner@njpca.org) or 609- 689-9930.

## **RESOURCES**

***The New Jersey Primary Care Association***

[www.njpca.org](http://www.njpca.org)

***National Committee for Quality Assurance***

[www.ncqa.org](http://www.ncqa.org)

***Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC)*** is a non-profit organization whose mission is to expand access to effective primary care in underserved communities. PCDC has worked with more than 200 primary care organizations throughout the country, helping them develop patient-centered approaches that strengthen their practices and improve and expand care. PCDC's "Obtaining Patient-Centered Medical Home Recognition: A How-To Manual" and its assessment tool for the 2011 NCQA PCMH standards are available here [www.pcdc.org](http://www.pcdc.org).

***Patient-Centered Medical Home Video***

<http://www.emmisolutions.com/medicalhome/acp>