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North Texas Specialty Physicians, Texas Health Resources Selected by CMS to Participate in the Pioneer ACO Model.

New model to improve patient care and decrease healthcare costs in North Texas

FORT WORTH and ARLINGTON, TX, December 19, 2011 -- North Texas Specialty Physicians (NTSP) and Texas Health Resources have been selected by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to participate in the [Pioneer ACO Model](#). Texas Health and NTSP are among an elite group of healthcare organizations nationwide chosen to participate in this new ACO pilot program.

The Pioneer ACO model initiative includes 32 qualified, collaborative entities across the country focused on improving patient care through better coordination and communication. As part of the Pioneer ACO model, NTSP and Texas Health will partner to improve the patient experience and medical outcomes while reducing the rate of growth in Medicare spending. Medicare patients in North Texas will see improvements in care without switching doctors or providers.

"North Texans deserve the best health care, and our ACO will provide top quality care, while managing care at the lowest reasonable cost," said Karen Van Wagner, Ph.D., executive director, NTSP and chief executive officer, *Plus*, the newly created ACO. "As a nation, we don't have unlimited resources for healthcare. Our organizations, and our state, will be at the forefront in developing smarter systems of patient care."

Texas Health and NTSP were selected by CMS because they have already demonstrated successful collaboration, in addition to meeting other criteria. [NTSP](#) has more than 10 years of experience with population health management and has participated in financial incentive programs tied to quality. [Texas Health](#) has been a primary participant in the NTSP health information exchange, known as Sandlot, which allows authorized medical professionals to communicate and share information relevant to patients' care and wellness electronically.

The CMS pilot program will further NTSP's collaboration with Texas Health to improve coordination of patient care and how that care is managed before, during and after hospitalization.

“NTSP and Texas Health have worked together for many years to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of care for patients,” said Doug Hawthorne, FACHE, chief executive officer of Texas Health Resources. “This initiative is part of Texas Health’s multi-year accountable care journey, which includes evaluation of various models through collaboration with physicians, payers and other health care providers.”

NTSP and Texas Health were selected for the initiative by a panel of experts from the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as private sector organizations with expertise in provider payment policy, care improvement and coordination, primary care and care of vulnerable populations.

“These Pioneer ACOs represent our nation’s leaders in health systems innovation, providing highly coordinated care for patients at lower costs,” said Marilyn Tavenner, Acting Administrator of CMS. “NTSP and Texas Health have demonstrated significant experience in providing high quality, coordinated care, and we are excited to partner with them.”

CMS will publicly report the performance of Pioneer ACOs on quality metrics, including patient experience ratings, on its website at www.cms.gov.

About NTSP

North Texas Specialty Physicians (known as NTSP) is an independent physician association comprised of more than 600 family and specialty doctors dedicated to delivering the best medical care to the residents of Dallas, Johnson, Parker and Tarrant Counties. Since its founding in 1995, NTSP doctors have delivered high quality medical care to over 15,000 patients every work day, and are able to coordinate patient care more efficiently and effectively through health information exchange technology. In 2010, NTSP was recognized as best in the country for its integrated patient care delivery system in Modern Healthcare’s Annual IT Case Study contest. For more information about NTSP, call 817-332-8847 or visit www.ntsp.com.

About THR

Texas Health Resources is one of the largest faith-based, nonprofit health systems in the United States. The health system includes 24 acute care and short-stay hospitals that are owned, operated, joint-ventured or affiliated with Texas Health Resources. It includes the Texas Health Presbyterian, Texas Health Arlington Memorial and Texas Health Harris Methodist hospitals, a large physician group, outpatient facilities, and home health, preventive and fitness services, and an organization for medical research and education. For more information about Texas Health Resources, call 1-877-THR-WELL, or visit www.texashealth.org.