



To: Saint Vincent Hospital Employees
From: Charlie Martin, Chairman and CEO Vanguard Health Systems and Joseph Mullany, President and CEO of New England and Chicago
Date: July 28, 2010
Re: Health for Life

We talked in our last letter about some of the problems in the health care system, especially about its high cost and less-than-the-best quality. So why isn't health better in the United States? Well for one thing we don't get 'health' from the health care system. Private insurers and our government simply don't pay for health. Instead they buy 'health care'.

Promoting Health

We're pretty sure we know what kinds of things contribute to good health - exercise, diet, preventive screenings, immunizations, stopping tobacco use. We know how to reduce the cost and improve the health and well-being of people with complex or chronic diseases. Their care needs to be coordinated across specialists. They could really benefit from a 'health coach' to guide them through the sometimes confusing health care system but also help them learn to create new and healthier habits. But the health care system doesn't pay for this - or pays so little for it that it is often not done at all.

What's Needed?

Some people think that none of this can change without a complete reform of health care driven by federal decision makers. We don't agree with that. We think we can build a system that delivers health and well-being without a full scale reform of health care in Washington. And we think, if done right, Vanguard and Saint Vincent Hospital and our physician partners can become a national model for reform.

But to do so we need to quickly build new skills and begin to more effectively use some strengths we already have. Here are a few of those competencies and strengths:

- Build an effective primary care model in each of our markets by acquiring great practices, by affiliating with others, by including nurse practitioners and physician assistants, after-hours clinics and even retail clinics.
- Expand our geographic and service “footprint” in each market so we can offer a complete panel of physicians and services and facilities throughout our metropolitan areas so that employers can work exclusively with us to meet the lion’s share of their employee’s health care needs.
- Establish a group of health coaches to work with patients with chronic diseases and complicated conditions to coordinate their care across several specialties and to manage their often complex array of prescriptions.
- Develop systems to take financial risk so we can share the savings created by promoting health and wellness with the individual and with their employer.
- Build an electronic medical record that is shared among all of our doctors, each of our patients and is owned by our patients.
- Form strong partnerships within our communities to encourage exercise, expand the number and reach of fresh produce markets, work with schools and other institutions to promote healthy eating and healthy living, build effective clinical bridges to nursing homes, health departments, federally qualified health centers.
- Design a new kind of health benefit plan that aligns our goals with those of the employer and his staff to help reduce cost, improve productivity and produce health.

These are the kind of skills we need to add to begin to change health care in Worcester, to develop ourselves as a model for change and begin to deliver on the promise of Health for Life. As a national company and as a local delivery system it is how we will win today and how we will flourish tomorrow.