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Carolyn Bloch, Editor

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WHCC Keynote Speakers Demanding Affordable Quality Healthcare

Dr. Linda Springer Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, oversees eight million enrollees requiring coverage for healthcare. Her priorities are to provide the best possible care at the lowest cost, provide choices for insurance plans, and at the same time, protect the employee's personal data. Dr. Springer presented her views at the 4th Annual World Health Care Congress co-sponsored by the Wall Street Journal on April 22-24 in Washington D.C.

Dr. Springer feels strongly that employees should have transparency with vital information on quality and pricing. OPM is working with the largest plans to make cost and quality information available to individuals that sign up with them. The reality is that if the plans do not provide the information needed, they will lose market share.

Gerald L Shaheen Group President, Caterpillar Inc., and Chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, emphasized how important it is for employers to provide greater transparency with greater access to quality, healthcare costs, and to expand health IT efforts.

He gave some ideas on how employers can emphasize wellness and prevention programs using financial incentives and counseling. One idea is for an employer to take two assessments a year and then if the employee is working towards wellness and prevention, the employee would get a discount on payments for insurance. Other ideas include employers conducting smoking cessation programs that include counseling that would increase the quit rate each year. Companies could also help in managing diabetes and obesity by co-managing counseling to help employees develop good meal plans.

Delos (Toby) Cosgrove M.D., Chairman and CEO, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, said the Clinic is putting the patient at the center of healthcare. For some time, the Clinic has offered patients the right to see their records over the internet using a system called "My Chart" so that patients can remain involved in their care.

The focus is now on the patient when they enter the hospital with a medical problem. The Clinic is now using a new patient centric model that organizes the patient's care by institutes. This organization of the patient's medical needs brings together multi-disciplines within 15 institutes that are then able to work together on the patient's medical issues.

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