



For Immediate Release

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**Three Leading Philadelphia-Area Health Systems Form New Initiative
to Work Collaboratively to Improve Care, Meet Demands of Health Reform**

Care coordination key as healthcare industry shifts from performing procedures to preventing illness

ABINGTON and PHILADELPHIA, PA – (July 16, 2013) – Abington Health, Aria Health and Einstein Healthcare Network announced today the development of a new initiative that will enable the three health systems to work collaboratively while remaining independent as they prepare for the demands of national health reform.

The three systems will work together initially to jointly manage the health care benefit plans of the systems' employees and their families, approximately 30,000 people. Longer term, the goal of the initiative is to establish a platform to improve care delivery throughout the community for individuals and families and improve the health of populations through highly coordinated and efficient care.

“In our region and across the country, health care reform is dramatically changing how healthcare services are offered to patients,” said Barry R. Freedman, President and CEO, Einstein Healthcare Network.

“Forward-thinking healthcare providers are developing new models and new collaborations with like-minded peers to tackle the challenges of reform and other industry trends that are transforming health care from a fragmented system based on fee-for-service reimbursement to a coordinated, collaborative system focused on the prevention of disease and management of chronic illness.”

The new initiative is a key first step in modeling the future of health care delivery with its focus on “population health management” across broad regions.

“Population health management calls on caregivers to consistently offer efficient, effective, high-quality care and anticipate – instead of respond to – the health needs of patients,” said Kathleen Kinslow, President and CEO, Aria Health.

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“This new approach, which we will offer first to our employees and their families, is built on care coordination, proactive interventions that prevent illness and collaboration with an array of community resources.”

Innovative health systems are taking a variety of approaches to pursuing population health management while maintaining their independence. These include the formation of Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs), clinical integration between hospital systems and physician group practices as well as hospital collaboratives. As of January, there were more than 400 ACOs sponsored by commercial payors or Medicare, for example. While the forms differ, these structures enable otherwise independent provider groups to work together to improve the quality of care and manage costs more effectively.

Planning already underway

The three independent systems have agreed to form a limited liability company (LLC) that will house the initiative. Each system will invest an equal amount in the initiative and each will name an equal number of representatives to its governing board. A search for the initiative’s executive leadership will be forthcoming.

Work groups that include representatives from all three health systems have been formed. These include groups focused on business planning, and the human resources and technological infrastructure for the initiative. These groups, as well as the leaders of the three health systems, will work closely with physicians as the initiative moves forward.

The immediate focus is to establish the infrastructure to administer the self-insured employee benefit plans currently sponsored by each of the health systems in the most efficient way through the initiative.

“Our goal is to employ population health management concepts so that the health of our employees and their dependents, and the health benefits that we provide, are improved,” said Laurence M. Merlis, President and CEO, Abington Health.

“The creation of this new initiative is the result of significant dialogue between us as we sought the best way to respond to the challenges of health reform while remaining independent and true to our not-for-profit missions.”

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About Abington Health

Abington Health is the parent organization that encompasses its flagship hospital, Abington Memorial Hospital, in Abington, Lansdale Hospital in Hatfield Township and three outpatient campuses. Together, these facilities serve more than 39,000 inpatients, 134,000 emergency patients and over 653,000 outpatient visits annually. More than 1,400 physicians are on staff at Abington Memorial Hospital and Lansdale Hospital. Additionally, Abington Health Physicians is a network of employed primary care physicians and specialists. Abington Health has more than 6,100 employees, making it one of the largest employers in Montgomery County. For more information, visit www.abingtonhealth.org or call 215-481-MEDI.

About Aria Health

Aria Health is the leading healthcare provider in Northeast Philadelphia and Lower Bucks County. Aria's three acute care hospitals and growing network of outpatient centers and physicians uphold a longstanding tradition of providing advanced medicine and personal care to the region. With 485 licensed beds, Aria employs over 4,000 and has a medical staff membership of more than 1,000. To learn more, please visit us at ARIAHEALTH.org or call 1-877-808-ARIA (2742).

About Einstein Healthcare Network

Einstein Healthcare Network is a 1,203-bed integrated delivery network with more than 8,500 employees serving the communities of Philadelphia and Montgomery County, Pa. Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia is the largest independent academic medical center in the Delaware Valley, providing training and education for nearly 450 residents and fellows each year. The network also provides a comprehensive range of healthcare services through the brand new Einstein Medical Center Montgomery, Einstein Medical Center Elkins Park, MossRehab, Belmont Behavioral Health, Willowcrest, outpatient facilities such as Einstein at Germantown and Einstein Center One, and a network of more than 500 employed primary care physicians and specialists. For more information, visit www.einstein.edu or call 1-800-EINSTEIN.