

**For Immediate Release**



## **New service model helps Great-West Healthcare members navigate health care system**

**GREENWOOD VILLAGE, Colo.** – August 6, 2007 – Great-West Healthcare, a national employee benefits provider, announced it has deployed a new customer service model to better service members and further improve satisfaction with their health plan.

Components of the Member Connect model include Member Champion, a program that assigns a dedicated advocate to help individuals during periods of complex medical care or administrative situations; a call center staffed with customer services representatives trained to adapt to callers' communication styles; and self-service via the phone or Web.

"Customer service has always been a vital piece of our business, but is increasingly important in the growing consumer-driven environment," said Donna Goldin, senior vice president, healthcare operations, Great-West Healthcare. "We encourage members to become more informed about their health and health care choices, so we must provide the solid, specific information they request. Historically, we've responded to members who call based on their benefits coverage, claims history and demographics only. Now we're going beyond these criteria to offer greater personalization for a more satisfying customer experience."

### **Member Champion helps with difficult situations**

A standard component of Great-West Healthcare member services, the Member Champion program provides specialized support for people who have complex clinical or administrative circumstances. This high-touch support comes from a select group of service representatives or registered nurses who serve as a member's single point of contact to help them navigate the health care system and use all available resources.

An individual can be referred to a Member Champion by a customer service representative (CSR), plan administrator, broker or Great-West Healthcare nurse or case manager. Each person's situation is reviewed, and members are directed to advocates specifically trained to provide assistance. In some cases, members seek more clinical guidance; in others, more administrative assistance.

### **Personalized support delivers accurate answers through improved communication**

Personalized support combines a unique technology and dedicated coaching to help CSRs respond more effectively to member calls. With this approach, Great-West Healthcare reports improved customer service satisfaction. Compared to a prior period in which no one had been trained, results from member calls with CSRs in this model program showed a 12 percent higher level of satisfaction – "extremely or very satisfied" – with responses to their inquiries, according to preliminary field results from an independent satisfaction survey by The Myers Group.

The same survey suggests a positive impact on member satisfaction with CSRs who were trained in this approach to dealing with customers compared with those who were not. Other areas of improvement included the ability of CSRs to answer questions clearly and concisely (6 percent increase); to address the issue by the end of the call (6 percent increase); to take complete ownership of the issue (6 percent increase); to demonstrate concern about the problem (6 percent increase); and to being perceived by members as polite, courteous and respectful (5

percent increase). The survey results show that trained CSRs more often understand caller inquiries and respond satisfactorily, thereby demonstrating improved customer service.

The technology catalogs and categorizes the customer's preferred style of communication, and CSRs are trained to recognize and adapt to these preferences. The technology and training also help CSRs recognize stress in voice and speech patterns. With this information, and through dedicated coaching for each CSR, caller experiences improve and, as a result, overall customer satisfaction rises.

After each member call, the application analyzes and scores the CSR's interaction with the caller. First-call resolution rates, reduced call duration, hold time, silence time and call transfers are evaluated. The CSR then participates in a coaching session during which calls are reviewed to learn how certain inquiries can be handled differently to further improve member satisfaction.

### **Self-service makes transactional requests more efficient**

Self-service via the phone or Web is ideal for members who simply want quick and easy access to basic health care information. Great-West Healthcare offers a new Great-West VoiceExpress interactive voice response (IVR) telephone system and an award-winning Web site, MyGreatWest.com. Both resources give members quick answers to common inquiries, such as benefits, eligibility and claim information. The new IVR provides automated access to claim and benefit information through voice-activated menus, and allows a caller to receive information via fax. The format is intuitive and easy to navigate. The MyGreatWest.com member Web site also offers a convenient way to find a provider, request a new ID card, compare plan costs, and access an extensive library of health and wellness information.

"Each service component composing Member Connect provides employees and their families with resources to assist them with their health care needs, and the model is transforming Great-West Healthcare from a transaction-based to a relationship-based business," notes Goldin.

### **About Great-West Healthcare**

Great-West Healthcare, a division of Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Company, is a national employee benefits provider with expertise in self-funding and health care management solutions. Nationally, the division operates a health care network that includes more than 4,275 hospitals and 578,000 providers and provides health care coverage to 2.2 million people. Visit [www.greatwesthealthcare.com](http://www.greatwesthealthcare.com) for more information.

Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Company, headquartered in metro-Denver, serves its customers through a full range of health care plans, life and disability insurance, annuities, and retirement savings products and services. It is an indirect, wholly owned subsidiary of Great-West Lifeco Inc. and a member of the Power Financial Corporation group of companies. Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Company is not licensed to do business in New York. Products are sold in New York by its subsidiary First Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Company, White Plains, N.Y.

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