



spotlight on health care

Health Benefits With A Healthier Bottom Line

(NAPSA)—A new cost-saving approach to corporate health care is just what the doctor ordered—and two major corporations may have just the prescription.

According to the most recent projections by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, health care will account for 20 percent of the nation's gross national product by 2016. And with health care costs on the rise, employers are clamoring for a fresh approach to designing employee health benefits.

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) advocates a three-pillared holistic approach to lowering health care costs and providing better care. It calls for:

- Prevention: to keep people healthier, longer.
- Intervention: to give patients the right medicines at the right time to maintain their health.
- Innovation: to find new cures and make life-ending diseases manageable.

GSK and Pitney Bowes, Inc. have sponsored the publication of "BenefIT Design: Seven Steps to Value-Based Health Benefit Decisions" to guide employers who want to change their approach to benefit planning, develop healthier employees and get better returns on their health care investment.

The book, co-authored by David Hom and Jack Mahoney of Pitney Bowes, guides employers through collecting, organizing, analyzing and responding to the employee health data they already have or can readily obtain but often do not use when making benefit design decisions.

"David Hom and Jack Mahoney are transforming the way employ-



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ers and health plans think about benefit design," says GSK's Scott Smith. "Even the most skeptical listener is won over by the commonsense approach of value-based benefits design."

Pitney Bowes found that three chronic illnesses—diabetes, asthma and hypertension—were major health care cost drivers for the company. Hospital stays and emergency room visits were up, and people weren't taking medications regularly—and those patients experienced higher medical costs the following year.

Mahoney and Hom lowered co-insurance for medications within selected chronic disease groups rather than raise the out-of-pocket costs for employees, and then measured progress. The bottom line was a net savings of \$1 million in 2004 and continued significant overall health care savings.

"The proof of your value-based strategy is in your people," the authors conclude. Investing in healthy employees makes healthy companies—and can help save health care in the U.S.

To obtain a copy of the book, call the GSK Response Center at 1-888-825-5249.