



For more information contact: Michael or Mary Rode
The Write Source for the BHCG
262-646-4242
info@thewritesourcegroup.com

Business Health Care Group marks tenth anniversary of driving meaningful change

MILWAUKEE – May 1, 2013 – In 2013 the Business Health Care Group (BHCG) (www.businesshealthcaregroup.org) marks its 10th anniversary. In the ten years of its existence, the BHCG has seen a dramatic improvement in southeast Wisconsin's health care cost position relative to the Midwest average – from 39 percent above the average costs in the Midwest in 2003 to only seven percent above the Midwest average – according to a recent analysis by the Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health (GMBFH). The BHCG has contributed to this positive trend through the implementation of successful strategies and collaborative activities with other health care stakeholders in the region.

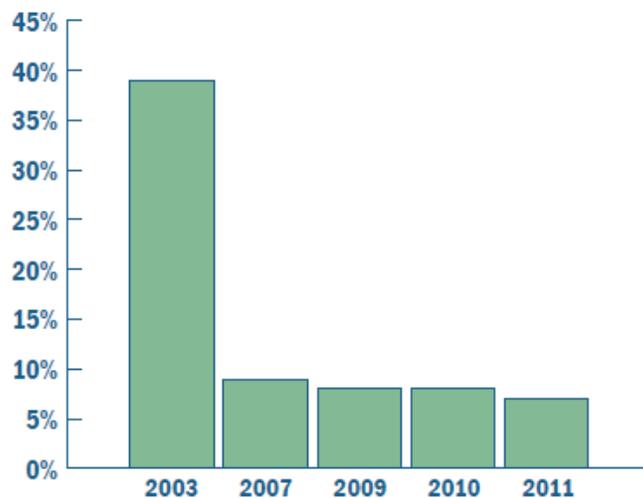
More than ten years ago CEOs of several large Milwaukee area-based employers were growing increasingly frustrated with health care costs in southeast Wisconsin as compared with other locations where they had operations. A 2003 report commissioned by the GMBFH revealed southeast Wisconsin health care costs to be 39 percent above the Midwest average. “We knew that the health care costs we were paying in southeast Wisconsin were unsustainable,” recalls Frank Jaehnert, president and CEO of Brady Corporation. “We felt that a reduction in health care costs to a more competitive level while maintaining or improving the quality of care could only be beneficial for all of us living in southeast Wisconsin.”

These CEOs understood it would take a number of employers speaking with one voice and utilizing a common strategy to impact the costs of the region. Ultimately, the BHCG was founded in 2003 by 11 corporations with headquarters in southeast Wisconsin to explore alternatives to contain health care costs. “Ten years later, we are proud to say that we served as a catalyst in driving meaningful change and addressing health care costs in southeast Wisconsin. Obviously the BHCG and our employer members cannot take sole credit for improving the health care cost picture in southeast Wisconsin. Health care providers in particular

deserve credit for enhancing the value – which includes improved cost and quality – of the service they provide. We should all be justifiably proud of our progress,” states Dianne Kiehl, BHCG’s executive director.

Since the original report in 2003, GMBFH, has re-examined the southeast Wisconsin/Midwest average health care cost differential in four subsequent reports. As the table below demonstrates, the region has made substantial progress, from 39 percent higher than the Midwest average in 2003 to only seven percent higher in 2011 (the most current data available).

Southeast Wisconsin Costs: Percentage Above Midwest Average



The study included residents of Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine, Ozaukee, Kenosha, Walworth and Washington counties.

Midwest defined as: Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska.

Source: Study of 2011 Southeast Wisconsin Community Healthcare Premium Costs, Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health, Inc., December 4, 2012

BHCG credits its success over the past 10 years to the strong commitment of its employer members, its collaboration with other health care stakeholders and the successful implementation of a number of strategies and initiatives including:

- The selection of single administrator, Humana, who supported a limited provider network delivering outstanding savings
- Growing membership to more than 100,000

- Providing educational events and forums to share best practices among employers
- Providing a forum for health care purchasers and providers to collaborate on solutions
- Influencing statewide efforts to positively impact the value of health care in our state
- Supporting employers in their efforts to make their employees educated purchasers of health care services
- Promoting and supporting employers' adoption of wellness programs

“While much work remains to be done if we are going to get southeast Wisconsin health care costs at or below the Midwest average, we should all pause for a moment to reflect on the substantial progress we have made in 10 short years in improving the economic viability of our community. We look forward to another 10 years of positively impacting health care in our region,” concludes Jaehnert.

About the Business Health Care Group:

The Business Health Care Group, formed in 2003, is a membership organization of nearly 1,200 employers and employer groups in the 11-county region of southeast Wisconsin. The BHCG and its members share the common goals of moving the health care market through innovative action and partnering for effective change. Visit www.businesshealthcaregroup.org to learn more.

#