WASHINGTON, D.C., March 3, 2010 – At a time when the final result of the national health care reform effort is unknown many providers have taken it upon themselves to implement some of the different concepts being discussed. Among the advanced concepts already in practice that are offering significant benefits to the delivery of health care are medical homes and Accountable Care Organizations. Within Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, or PACE, these concepts help form the basis for the proven results and outstanding care that PACE provides to its enrollees. As policymakers consider implementing medical homes and ACOs more widely, PACE’s experience in these areas can be beneficial to the entire health care delivery system and speed implementation of these advances.

“The fundamentals of medical homes and ACOs are an essential component of and actively incorporated in the PACE model of senior care,” said Shawn Bloom, President and CEO of the National PACE Association. “Just like a medical home, our medical care teams work together to expand the reach, knowledge and influence of a beneficiary’s primary care physician. By augmenting an enrollee’s personalized health care with nutritional guidance, social and physical therapy, and other specialized medical care as needed, PACE places its patients at the center of a care model that has measurably improved outcomes.”

Medical homes are based upon a patient-centered model of care with the goal of providing both preventive and daily care. Under the medical home model, patients have an ongoing relationship with their primary care physician who leads a group of medical and health care professionals. This group works collaboratively to develop health care programs that are tailored to patients’ needs. The health care system is fully integrated, providing patients with greater access to care.

“It is this concept of coordination and integration that has led to exceptional results among PACE’s enrollees,” said Adam Burrows, Medical Director of Upham's Elder Service Plan in Boston. “The majority of our enrollees are able to remain at home and receive their medical care through the PACE Center despite being nursing home qualified. PACE programs effectively maintain the health, independence and dignity of seniors with long term care needs as they age by emphasizing preventive and primary care, leading to documented results in preserving wellness, supporting healthy outcomes, and promoting quality of life.”
While the patient is the central focus of the medical home, the focus of Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) shared responsibility. Accountable Care Organizations seek to increase the quality of care, better manage chronic conditions among the elderly and control expenditures, while relying heavily on medical providers being equally accountable for increasing the quality of care that is offered. In an effort to develop an option that consumers consider good value and controls high costs, ACOs are being touted as a potential goal of health care reform.

“The PACE team of medical professionals and the organization itself bear the responsibility to ensure the health of enrollees is sustained through a variety of needs and specialties without consuming greater resources as chronic illnesses increase,” said Amy Minnich, Executive Director of LIFE Geisinger. “Because of the bundled reimbursement PACE receives to care for enrollees, and our ability to achieve high quality and good outcomes, PACE is the ultimate implementation of an Accountable Care Organization.”

At the heart of PACE is extensive experience showing the benefits of the medical home concept, unified and accountable systems of care, and comprehensive payment structures in transforming the nation’s silos of care into high performing health systems. PACE’s documented excellence in preserving wellness, supporting healthy outcomes, and promoting quality through a capitated payment system is a model that policymakers should consider when undertaking national health reform.

With 73 PACE programs now operating in 31 states, aging Americans and their caregivers have an even greater opportunity to benefit from the PACE approach to elder care. PACE effectively maintains the health, independence and dignity of seniors with long term care needs as they age by emphasizing preventive and primary care as well as nutrition, transportation and most other services that support the health and well-being of program participants. PACE organizations offer documented results in preserving wellness, supporting healthy outcomes, and promoting quality of life to reduce hospital visits and avoid nursing home admissions. By avoiding these costs, PACE programs reduce expensive care interventions and provide families with peace of mind that their loved one is receiving the best possible care in the most appropriate setting.

“Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly provide the most widespread examples of health care providers currently implementing both concepts of medical homes and ACOs across multiple providers in both rural and urban locations,” said Shawn. “In studying PACE, decision makers in the health care reform debate have the opportunity to examine how their proposed components work in a real life atmosphere. The PACE model of care provides documented excellence to its enrollees and can offer immeasurable insight into the future of our health care delivery system.”

To view the full document, please go to www.pace4you.org and click on the Media Kit button.

About NPA:
The National PACE Association works to advance the efforts of Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) to support, maintain, safeguard and promote the provision of quality, comprehensive and cost-effective health care services for frail older adults. More information on NPA and PACE is available at www.npaonline.org. A list of PACE programs can be found at www.pace4you.org.

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