

For Immediate Release

Providing Access to High-Quality Cancer Care is a High Priority for Employers, Northeast Business Group on Health Report Finds

NEW YORK, April 27, 2016 – Employers are concerned about the high cost of cancer care but they're equally concerned about making sure employees and family members diagnosed with cancer are receiving top-quality care, says a new report from Northeast Business Group on Health (NEBGH). The report, "[*Employers and Cancer Care Quality: A Closer Look*](#)," also says employers want to make sure the dollars they invest in cancer care are well spent and also have a strong desire to support the best possible outcomes and quality of life for those who have embarked on a cancer journey.

"Employee benefits professionals often serve as the gateway to accessing cancer care during a tumultuous time for employees and families," said Laurel Pickering, President and CEO of NEBGH. "Employers are invested in the well-being of their employees, and they want to be confident they're steering people to trusted providers and institutions based on reliable information about outcomes and adherence to quality measures. Employers also have an important role to play by leveraging their purchasing power with health plans, hospitals and third parties to help accelerate greater transparency in quality, outcomes and pricing."

NEBGH's report is based on a survey, interviews with cancer experts and employer benefits professionals, and two 2015 workshops attended by a total of 50 stakeholders – employer benefits professionals, and physicians and executives from health plans, hospitals, consulting organizations, cancer associations and suppliers of healthcare-related services. The report includes NEBGH's Cancer Care Glossary, Cancer Resource List and Cancer Care Checklist, resources for employers developed by NEBGH in response to the concerns and questions raised by employers.

NEBGH conducted a benchmarking survey with self-insured employers representing 1.2 million covered employees. About half of employers reported they do not offer third-party second-opinion services – an area highlighted by NEBGH at a subsequent workshop for employers because of data showing that second opinions can often reveal an initial misdiagnosis or point to a different treatment path, and that health plan-directed second opinions are sometimes mistrusted by employees. Less than half of survey respondents said they have a network of high-performing oncology providers in place, and results also show there are variations and gaps in the non-clinical support services offered such as treatment navigation, emotional counseling and financial planning services.

"Cancer is not one disease, but literally hundreds, and therefore attempts to provide a single definition of cancer care quality are complicated," said Jeremy Nobel, MPH, MD, and Executive Director of NEBGH's Solutions Center, which conducted this work. "Nevertheless there are medical community networks and

alliances as well as accreditors who do in fact provide useful definitions of quality and promote evidence-based guidelines and pathways employers need to be educated about. We hope the resources we've produced are of significant help.

"Another major gap highlighted in our work is the lack of accessible, organized and systematic communications efforts directed to employees. Employers are investing a lot in trying to provide the best cancer care and support possible for their employees, and effective communications are key in making sure employees are aware of and can access these programs," said Dr. Nobel.

About NEBGH

NEBGH is an employer-led coalition of healthcare leaders and other stakeholders with the mission of empowering members to drive excellence in health and achieve the highest value in healthcare delivery and the consumer experience. The Solutions Center is NEBGH's research and discovery platform for identifying the most promising, innovative opportunities for improving health outcomes, focused on employers as the catalyst for change.

Merck and Genentech provided funding to NEBGH's Solutions Center for its work on cancer care quality.

Access the guide [here](#).

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