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## **Northeast Business Group on Health Initiative Will Speed Solutions to Employers Facing Urgent Healthcare Challenges**

*First NEBGH Solutions and Innovations Center initiative, sponsored by Merck and Boehringer-Ingelheim, will target growing cost of hospital readmissions*

**New York, NY, July 26, 2011** – [Northeast Business Group on Health \(NEBGH\)](#) today announced the creation of the [Solutions and Innovations Center](#) that will identify innovative ways to improve the quality and value of employee health care, with a focus on speeding solutions to the marketplace for immediate use by the region's businesses, employers and healthcare consumers.

"Healthcare costs are weighing on corporate balance sheets and undermining global competitiveness, and companies need solutions fast," said [Laurel Pickering, NEBGH's Executive Director](#). "The Solutions and Innovations Center will explore ways to control costs, improve employee health and productivity, and put actionable information in the hands of employers faster than ever before."

Led by [Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH](#), a nationally recognized expert in public health and healthcare delivery, the Center will work with NEBGH members and leading experts from the fields of medicine, academia and business to coordinate timely and focused research and disseminate results.

Today, designing and implementing new approaches to value-based health benefits typically takes several years from concept to contract. The SIC will focus on strategies that will have a meaningful impact on accelerating this timeline, resulting in nearer-term delivery of meaningful improvements in healthcare cost and quality.

The SIC will be guided by a [Leadership Council](#) with responsibility for setting research priorities and will appoint a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) to ensure that research methods meet the highest standards. For a list of Leadership Council members, click [here](#). Using social media, conferences, publications, and media outreach, the SIC will quickly share information about projects and findings in order to benefit the largest possible number of businesses, employees and other stakeholders.

The Solutions and Innovations Center's first major initiative will be to study one of the greatest drivers of unnecessary healthcare costs for employers – preventable hospital readmissions. Today, a significant number of hospital patients are readmitted for preventable reasons, costing employers billions of dollars each year. This project, which closely aligns with the goals of the federal "Partnership for Patients" initiative, is sponsored by Merck and Boehringer-Ingelheim and will identify effective ways to reduce readmissions in the near term, as well as benefit designs and reimbursement models that incentivize this improvement. Other initiatives will target important aspects of ambulatory care including improving depression screening and treatment.

"Employers need new solutions in the delivery of health care," said Mary Bradley, NEBGH Board Chair and Director of Health Care Planning at Pitney Bowes. "Northeast Business Group on Health's Solutions and Innovations Center will help employers find winning solutions to rein in costs and achieve a healthier, more productive workforce."

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**About Northeast Business Group on Health**

Northeast Business Group on Health is a network of employers, providers, insurers, and other organizations working together to improve the quality and reduce the cost of health care in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Since its inception in 1982 as New York Business Group on Health, the organization has spearheaded important initiatives, conducted breakthrough research and launched innovative programs that have brought meaningful change to the healthcare marketplace for employers in the New York-metropolitan area. In November 2010, the organization changed its name to the Northeast Business Group on Health and expanded its mission to serve employers across the region. For more information, visit [www.nebgh.org](http://www.nebgh.org) or call (212) 252-7440 x223.