

For Immediate Release

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HCC Hires Medical Director for Network, Rural Health Clinics in Concordia, Waverly

The Health Care Collaborative (HCC) of Rural Missouri has recently hired a medical director, Randall Lee Culbertson, DO, MBA, to drive quality outcomes for some of HCC's network programs like the Telehealth Outreach Diabetes and Depression program, Social Innovation for Missouri as well as other initiatives. Additionally, Culbertson will oversee two rural health clinics in Concordia and Waverly, currently owned by Lafayette Regional Health Center (LRHC). HCC will assume ownership of the clinics in May 2013. The move comes after HCC network partners LRHC, Pathways Community Health and I-70 Medical Center combined efforts to increase access to quality care for area residents as well as establish health homes in Lafayette County.

"Dr. Culbertson's expertise as a physician, hospital administrator and health information technology consultant is the perfect fit for HCC and the clinics we will soon operate," said Toniann Richard, HCC's executive director. "He brings with him a rare, depth of knowledge that will maximize the clinics' ability to offer optimal health care services. We believe this will serve our patients well."

Culbertson's role will include everything from establishing quality control measures to providing support and guidance to the medical staff. Culbertson will also play an intricate role in helping patients prevent and manage chronic disease. This includes creating a framework for treating patients with chronic illnesses, identifying patients at risk for conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity, and setting goals to help improve health outcomes. Culbertson will help the clinics address high risk behaviors like tobacco use through patient-centered cessation and coaching programs, among other initiatives.

The clinics will provide primary care for both children and adults, and oral health care services for Medicaid children. Additionally, behavioral health services will be provided through a partnership with Pathways Community Health. The clinics will be renamed Live Well Health & Wellness Center, Concordia and Live Well Health & Wellness Center, Waverly. Services will be provided to the insured, uninsured, as well as those receiving Medicaid and Medicare.

"I've seen a move toward wellness and prevention and I think it's the absolute right way to go," Culbertson said. "HCC's ability to reach out to people who may not have access to preventive health care and finding a way to provide it is really important."

About Dr. Culbertson

Culbertson's career track is both dynamic and fluid. In the early 70's, he graduated from Missouri State University in Springfield, MO with a degree in chemistry. Working as a chemist for a pharmaceutical company Culbertson aspired to do more.

"I didn't think I was using my full potential," he said. "I decided to go back and apply to med school. I think once you quit learning, you fall behind quickly. I wanted to continue to learn my entire life."

A Raytown, MO native, Culbertson got accepted into the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences and later graduated as a Doctor of Osteopathy (DO). His desire to keep learning

perpetuated a career path that took him from practicing medicine, to hospital administration, to consulting with Cerner Corporation on health information technology and then back to hospital administration where he serves as vice president of business development for Health Corporation of America (HCA), Midwest Missouri Division.

“Every place that I have been is a little different, but I continue to learn and gain knowledge about people and how to serve them,” Culbertson said. “I think it is important not to get into a rut but to continue to look for ways to improve how we provide health care services to those in our community.”

Access to preventive health care

Increasing access to preventive care before a trip to the emergency room is one case in point. “We need to get people into the system earlier in a more efficient and cost effective manner,” Culbertson said.

“Going to the emergency room once you’ve had a stroke is not good for anyone and it is a very expensive proposition.” Culbertson added that early access allows for preventive work like addressing diet, health habits, medication and identifying other risk factors to mitigate negative outcomes.

“I think what is important to understand is that all people need health care—and it should not be a privilege to get it, but a right to have it,” he said. “With that being the case, we need to figure out a way for people to get the services they need at the time they need it. If we wait until there is a catastrophic event, it is often too late.”

Telehealth in rural communities

He said another important component to increasing access to preventive care is telehealth. Culbertson points out that most rural communities don’t have a large pool of specialists like cardiologist, psychiatrist, vascular surgeons, or endocrinologist. Instead, rural areas have primary care doctors, who are invaluable and can treat any number of health problems that may occur. But, Culbertson says, there will always be things that come about that require specialty care.

“The unfortunate part is that we don’t have those specialists available on a daily basis in rural areas,” he said. “We need to find a way for people to access specialty care as quickly and as efficiently as we can. A lot of hospitals provide a specialist once a week that may drive to a rural town and see patients, but that leaves six days a week without access to a specialist.”

Telehealth has the potential to allow patients access to specialists. People with acute conditions can simultaneously visit with a specialist and with their primary care doctor to decide the necessary course of treatment—without ever leaving their own community.

The technology allows remote specialists to use stethoscopes, otoscopes for the ears, ophthalmoscopes for the eyes, high definition cameras for the skin as well as a host of other peripheral tools for thorough patient evaluations much like an in-person visit.

Culbertson admits that telehealth has some obstacles to overcome, like reimbursement challenges among other things, but says it is still a viable tool for increasing access to quality care. “There are a lot of moving parts here,” Culbertson said. “But we need to continue work to make sure we develop

partnerships that enable us to deliver the best care we can, as quickly and efficiently as we can and all the while, making good decisions on behalf of our patients.”

Culbertson, who received an MBA from Baker University, has a long list of associations and credentials. Some of his past service includes vice president of medical affairs for Carondelet Health, president of Culbertson Healthcare Associates and interim chief medical officer at Centerpoint Medical Center. He and his wife Shelly have three children and reside in Grain Valley, MO.

About the HCC

The Health Care Collaborative of Rural Missouri collaborates with area agencies, businesses and other non-profits to advocate for the health and well being of Lafayette County residents. Among HCC's current programs are:

- Health information technology initiatives to equip health care providers with the resources needed to offer telemedicine and telehealth services that increase patient access to quality health care;
- Social Innovation for Missouri (SIM) that addresses tobacco cessation and obesity prevention; among other programs; and
- Rural Missouri Health Co-op—with a workplace wellness component—aimed at creating a healthier workforce and reducing insurance premiums.

