

## AMA Commends Aetna for Quality First Commitment

by PR-NewsWire

NEW YORK, Nov. 13 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The following statement is attributable to Nancy H. Nielsen, M.D., Ph.D., AMA President-elect:

"The American Medical Association (AMA) welcomes today's announcement that New York Attorney General Cuomo has expanded health insurer participation in the groundbreaking agreement he secured last month on physician ranking programs. Aetna's decision to join CIGNA in agreeing to patient protections required by the Attorney General is an important step toward ensuring that physician evaluations are used primarily to enhance the quality of patient care.

"Aetna's decision demonstrates a commendable and necessary commitment to providing patients with reliable and meaningful information on physicians. The agreement will likely have an important impact on patients across the country since Aetna will be the first health insurer to voluntarily apply the requirements nationwide.

"The AMA is committed to the goal of empowering patients to become more informed purchasers of health care. A lack of proper oversight, however, has allowed health insurers across the country to unfairly evaluate the individual work of physicians. Physician evaluations can be skewed through the use of economic criteria, insufficient sampling of patient cases, questionable quality measures and poor adjustments for risk. Distorted evaluations can mislead patients and erode confidence and trust in physicians, and disrupt patient's longstanding relationships with physicians who have cared for them for years.

"The key aspects of the Aetna and CIGNA agreements help guard against patients receiving skewed and inaccurate information on caring physicians who were unfairly evaluated. Both health insurers have agreed to renounce physician evaluations and rankings based solely on economic factors and instead they will adopt a balanced approach that acknowledges physician ratings have a risk of error and should not be the sole basis for selecting a physician.

"Given the potential for irreparable damage to the patient-physician relationship, the AMA commends Attorney General Cuomo for his continued leadership in establishing fundamental protections that seek to minimize the risks inherent in physician evaluation programs, and welcomes Aetna's decision to implement this agreement across the country.

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Source: American Medical Association

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