

### *Program Overview*

#### **The Problem: Preventable and Mismanaged Chronic Disease**

Chronic diseases, such as asthma, cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States and account for the vast majority of health care spending. They affect the quality of life for 133 million Americans and is responsible for seven out of every ten deaths in the U.S. – killing more than 1.7 million Americans every year.<sup>1,2</sup>

Chronic diseases are also the primary driver of health care costs – accounting for more than 75 cents of every dollar we spend on health care in this country, as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In 2007, this amounted to \$1.65 trillion of the \$2.2 trillion spent on health care.

Despite these widespread problems, the issue of chronic disease does not register with large segments of the public and policymakers as an issue of primary concern.

#### **The Solution: A National Partnership Aimed at Fighting Disease**

As the CDC has said, “The United States cannot effectively address escalating health care costs without addressing the problem of chronic diseases.” That’s why a broad group of patient, provider, community, business and labor groups, and health policy experts, has joined together to form the **Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease (PFCD)** – a national and state-based coalition committed to raising awareness of the number one cause of death, disability, and rising health care costs in the U.S.: rising rates of preventable and treatable chronic diseases.

#### ***Mission***

The PFCD believes that rising rates of chronic health problems pose a significant and unsustainable burden on the U.S. health care system, and that the viability and strength of the system—presently and in the future—relies on a willingness to enact policies that help Americans better prevent and manage chronic illnesses.

As a result, the mission of the PFCD is to:

- **Educate** the public about chronic disease and potential solutions for individuals and communities
- **Mobilize** Americans to call for change in how governments, employers, and health institutions approach chronic disease
- **Challenge** policymakers on the health policy changes that are necessary to effectively fight chronic disease

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<sup>1</sup> Partnership for Solutions. Chronic Conditions: Making the Case for Ongoing Care. September 2004 Update. Available at: <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/chronicbook2002.pdf>. Accessed on April 17, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Chronic Disease Overview page. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/overview.htm>. Accessed April 6, 2007.



### ***Policy Agenda***

PFCD offers a united voice that injects patient-focused policies and practices into the national dialogue on important health care issues and works to:

- Advance sustainable “Next Generation” chronic disease prevention, early intervention, and management models throughout the health care system and public health infrastructure
- Promote healthy lifestyles and disease prevention and management in every community
- Encourage and reward continuous advances in clinical practice and research that improve the quality of care for those with prevalent and costly chronic diseases
- Accelerate improvements in the quality and availability of health information technology (HIT) throughout the health care system
- Reduce health disparities by focusing on barriers to good health

The full PFCD policy platform, which was developed as a consensus-based agenda with the input of PFCD national partners, is available at [www.fightchronicdisease.org/advocate](http://www.fightchronicdisease.org/advocate).

### ***Advisory Board***

The PFCD Advisory Board is comprised of high-profile leaders from the public and private sector and is led by Ken Thorpe, PFCD Executive Director and Professor and Chair at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. Richard H. Carmona, M.D, M.P.H., FACS, 17<sup>th</sup> US Surgeon General (2002-2006) and President of Canyon Ranch Institute, serves as the national Chairperson of the PFCD.

### ***Partners***

The PFCD is a national and state-based coalition of hundreds of patient, provider, community, business and labor groups, and health policy experts, committed to raising awareness of policies and practices that save lives and reduce health costs through more effective prevention and management of chronic disease. More than 120 leading organizations from across the nation, and hundreds of partners in the 17 states in which the PFCD is active, have joined the organization since its launch in May 2007.

For more information on the PFCD, visit [fightchronicdisease.org](http://fightchronicdisease.org).