



APRIL 28, 2008

**CONTACT:**  
**Kevin Dyer**  
**EBS Capstone**  
**617-244-3737**  
**Kevin.Dyer@ebscapstone.com**

## **SURVEY: EMPLOYERS HAVE HIGH CONFIDENCE THEY CAN CONTROL HEALTH CARE COSTS WITH PROPER TOOLS**

**– Nearly 75 percent have or want to have a wellness program with a health risk assessment; fewer than 25 percent want taxpayer-funded universal health care –**

Newton, MA – EBS Capstone, part of United Benefit Advisors, LLC (UBA), one of the nation's leading employee benefits advisory organizations, today announced key findings from its *2008 UBA Employer Opinion Survey*, which delineates employers' specific health care strategies, health benefits philosophy and opinion, health plan management, and Consumer Driven Health Care.

The release of the *2008 UBA Employer Opinion Survey* contains representative responses from employers by both region and employer size. Of the 1,664 employers polled, 72.5% have or want to have a wellness program that utilizes a health risk assessment; and 59.2% have or desire to implement a chronic disease management program. The survey also found that employers with 200 or more employees were 54% more likely to describe themselves as "leading edge" or "fairly quick" to adopt wellness programs. Firms with more than 1,000 employees produced results that indicated they were two-and-a-half times as likely to describe themselves as "leading edge" or "fairly quick" concerning disease management program adoption.

"The tide has clearly turned in that the majority of employers believe in the long-term value and positive impact that comprehensive wellness and disease management programs provide," said William Stafford, Vice President, Member Services for UBA. "Keeping the healthy employees healthy while stabilizing and/or improving the health of employees with chronic conditions will dramatically improve everyone's health and quality of life."

Other clear trends emerged related to employers' perspective on what the government's role should be in improving the health care landscape. Just 26% of employers want the government to develop a taxpayer-funded universal health care system. Without regard to employee size or geographic region, more than 75% of employers surveyed felt the government should require hospitals and doctors to:

- Publicly disclose pricing
- Require insurers to publicly disclose actual discounted prices paid to providers
- Mandate health care provider quality reporting

"This survey illustrates that employers have a high level of confidence in their ability to control health care costs and that their employees can make informed choices if given the additional tools necessary to do so," Stafford said. "In the current environment, the absence of readily available price and quality data

coupled with an expectation of both employers and employees to make sound health care decisions is like asking someone to navigate turbulent waters while blindfolded and without the ability to steer.”

Notable results in other categories include:

- **60%** of employers felt health plans/insurers and the government are ultimately responsible for controlling the cost of health care
- Just **1%** felt the government should have a say in deciding which doctor or hospital patients should use or how to manage chronic conditions
- **8.4%** of employers felt doctors and hospitals should be responsible for controlling costs

Asked to project ahead five years:

- **86.8%** of employers surveyed believed more health care costs will shift to their employees — down **5%** from the 2006 survey
- **51.0%** felt that Consumer Driven Health Plans would be the dominant plan type — down from **52.9%** in 2006
- **47.4%** felt both they and their employees will have the price and quality data necessary to make good health care spending decisions
- More than **98%** were confident they would provide health care benefits to their employees one year from now

“Overall, the survey results show that employers take their role as the primary source for health care coverage in America quite seriously,” said Paul Rooney, Managing Partner at EBS Capstone. “Employers have made it quite clear that they cannot take sole responsibility for health care costs; they need to partner with employees, physicians, hospitals and the government to find a solution to the health care crisis we are all experiencing.”

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#### **ABOUT THE 2008 UBA EMPLOYER OPINION SURVEY**

The *2008 UBA Employer Opinion Survey* and the *2007 UBA Employer Survey* (which addressed personal health management/wellness, employee communications and scope of benefits) serve as companion pieces to the *2007 UBA Health Plan Survey*. Released this past August, the *2007 UBA Health Plan Survey* is the largest health plan benchmarking survey in the nation. Results from the *2008 UBA Health Plan Survey* will be released in August 2008.

#### **ABOUT UNITED BENEFIT ADVISORS**

United Benefit Advisors, one of the nation’s largest employee benefit advisory organizations, has more than 1,900 experienced benefits professionals in more than 165 offices throughout the U.S. and Canada. An alliance of 140 of the nation’s premier independent benefit advisory firms, UBA members are better positioned to help employers and their employees respond more efficiently and effectively to the challenges of an ever-changing employee benefit marketplace. Visit UBA online at [www.benefits.com](http://www.benefits.com) to locate your local UBA Member Firm.