

Aetna to offer health care management services in Dubai

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Duba: Aetna, a leading US health care company serving approximately 37.2 million people, has been appointed by the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) as a health care management company (HMC) to provide services to outpatient care practices (OCPs), also known as primary health care practices, in Dubai.

These outpatient clinics, responsible for managing and directing the health care of residents, are a central part of a new government-sponsored, health care system aimed at promoting access to high-quality, affordable, basic health care.

Implementation of the system will begin next month.

The Dubai Government currently offers select health programmes to its 1.5 million residents, more than a million of which are expatriates.

Registration

Under the new system, residents must register with an OCP to access and receive basic health services. It is estimated that roughly 300 to 500 clinics will join the system in 2009.

Aetna is one of only two HMCs appointed to assist OCPs in leveraging the opportunities the new system provides.

Aetna, in partnership with Gateway Healthcare, will provide administrative, financial and other value-added services, including the management and flow of funds to OCPs, negotiation of arrangements with hospitals and specialist clinics and development of care and disease management programmes for use in the clinical setting.

This will allow OCPs to focus on patient care.

Ronald A. Williams, Aetna chairman and CEO, said, "We have a range of skills that can support the government's goal of strengthening health care delivery in Dubai."

Aetna's proven experience in managing health care quality and cost to a budget, through effective contracting and procurement techniques, was a key component of the company's successful bid.

Aetna's international division, Aetna Global Benefits (AGB), coordinated the overall effort and will build the organisation by leveraging its existing infrastructure in Dubai.

Martha Temple, president of AGB, said: "Our goal is to help create a primary care-focused health care system in Dubai dedicated to providing comprehensive individual-centred care."

"We will work consultatively and collaboratively with the independent outpatient care practices, Dubai Health Authority and other stakeholders to develop an appropriate and targeted plan that will meet the needs of the people of Dubai."

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