



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 13, 2010

Americans with Stand-Alone Vision are Twice as Likely to Receive Eye Exams

*Study results highlight value stand-alone vision plans could bring as
part of Health Care Exchanges*

July 13, 2010, Indianapolis, Indiana – According to a new study conducted for the National Association of Vision Care Plans (NAVCP) by an independent research firm, health care consumers who participate in full service, stand-alone vision insurance plans are two times (33.3 percent) more likely to receive an annual comprehensive eye examination than those consumers that have vision care coverage “bundled” with their major medical plan (16.3 percent). The study reviewed eye exam usage patterns of nearly 85 million Americans enrolled in vision benefits programs during 2008 and 2009. The results indicate that while vision plan membership has been increasing and eye exams have been utilized at a higher growth rate than membership, indicating consumers value the wellness component of their vision benefits that allows for the recognition of symptoms of chronic disease, as well as assessment of the need for vision correction. The study further bolsters the NAVCP’s position that stand-alone vision plans should be included within the Health Care Exchanges contemplated by the recently passed health care reform legislation. This inclusion can be expected to significantly increase the number of Americans receiving routine, preventive eye care, as well as improve long-term medical outcomes.

“For the first time, the majority of the U.S. vision benefits companies have come together to study the impact their products and services have on the lives of tens of millions of

health care consumers,” explains Liz DiGiandomenico, President of EyeMed Vision Care and Past President of the NAVCP. “We have always known the eye exam is an important component of overall health, but this first-ever study offers additional perspective on the role the vision plan plays in consumer usage patterns. “

The results overwhelmingly support the concept that a far greater proportion of Americans who have stand-alone vision care benefits understand the importance of regular eye health examinations than those Americans who have eye health insurance embedded within their broader medical insurance coverage. Stand alone vision plans participating in the study yielded nearly 17 million consumer eye exams annually.

Utilization summary by plan type:

	Members	Exams	Utilization %
Exam+Materials			
Stand-alone	50,253,582	16,721,809	33.3%
Exam+Materials			
Bundled	7,205,883	1,175,261	16.3%
Exam-only			
Stand-alone	10,954,779	732,525	6.7%
Exam-only			
Bundled	5,020,795	352,826	7.0%
Medicare/ Medicaid	11,545,621	1,887,183	16.3%

“Eye health is incredibly vital to overall health,” says Richard Sanchez, President and CEO of Advantica Eyecare and current NAVCP President. “Doctors understand that comprehensive eye examinations can lead to the early detection of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and even reveal high cholesterol”.

“Stand-alone vision plans offer a vital service and are an integral part of health care delivery in our country. In order to ensure related improvements in overall health, and medical cost control for Americans, it is essential that stand-alone vision plans are widely available as part of the new health care landscape.” adds Sanchez.

Children whose parents have stand-alone vision benefits are more likely to receive routine eye care according to the study. Parents with stand-alone vision benefits are more than twice as likely to take their children to the eye doctor (29-percent) than those with exam benefits bundled through their medical plans (12.5-percent).

Child utilization by plan type:

Children	Members	Utilization %
Exam+Materials		
Stand-alone	12,933,207	29.0%
Exam+Materials		
Bundled	1,939,445	12.5%
Exam-only		
Stand-alone	2,225,463	7.4%
Exam-only		
Bundled	1,734,127	4.2%

“There may be thousands of children with perceived or misdiagnosed learning disabilities who really need an eye exam and, in many cases, simply need a pair of glasses,” added Sanchez. “Building awareness for regularly scheduled eye exams as part of overall health is important for all family members. Stand-alone vision plans are, as the study indicates, a key part of the overall health care equation.”

Additionally, consumer continuity of care with stand-alone vision coverage is higher when compared to those consumers who have coverage bundled with major medical. The study revealed 36-percent of patients with stand-alone coverage received an eye examination in consecutive years, compared to 22-percent of patients with bundled care.

Rob Lynch, CEO of VSP® Vision Care comments, “The key factor in an eye health and overall health maintenance program is the delivery of consistent care resulting in high consumer satisfaction. Patients with stand-alone vision benefits develop longer, deeper and more lasting relationships with their eye doctors than those with bundled insurance. As such, stand-alone patients are more likely to have a health care experience that has a more impactful role on the broader spectrum of their general health.”

About the NAVCP

The **National Association of Vision Care Plans (NAVCP)** is the trade association for the Managed Vision Care industry serving as the voice for the vision benefits industry. The mission of the NAVCP is efficient consumer access to quality vision care through promotion and advancement of the vision benefits industry. The NAVCP strives to improve quality and efficiency in the delivery of vision care for consumers and providers and promotes the value and importance of vision care and vision benefits to both consumers and employers. The 16 primary member companies manage extensive networks of vision care providers and include vision benefit coverage to over 75 million Americans. The NAVCP also has 17 allied members, companies who do not fit the profile of primary members, but have an interest in the vision care industry. For more information about the National Association of Vision Care Plans, please visit www.NAVCP.org.