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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**National Business Coalition Awards Priority Health's Success at Lowering Medical Costs**

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. August, 2002-- The National Business Coalition on Health (NBCH) announced that Priority Health is this year's recipient of the Innovation Award in the Improving Member Compliance and Disease Management Category. NBCH awarded Priority Health for its strong corporate commitment to clinical quality improvement specifically in its Asthma Management Program. An award profile stated "As a result of these initiatives, they have seen much improvement in the health of members with asthma, reducing emergency room visits and inpatient stays by 60 percent, reducing beta-agonist overuse by 73 percent and lowering medical costs by \$2,100 per member per year."

"Identifying health plans that offer innovative solutions that create long-term sustainable savings is essential in this economy," said Gregg Lehman, PhD., NBCH president and CEO. "As employers refine their purchasing strategies and bring standardized approaches to the health plan procurement process, they will increasingly look for those plans that stand above the rest in offering 'value-added' services that are measurably effective."

NBCH announced the Innovation Awards for health plans that demonstrate positive progress and evidence that they are meeting employers goals to: (1) improve commercial members' compliance with disease management programs; (2) address preventive health care needs; (3) and support informed consumer decision making.

"It is very rewarding to receive recognition for our efforts to improve member health," said Kimberly Horn, Priority Health President and CEO. "We continue to be committed to helping families experience healthier lives by providing access to excellent and affordable health care."

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Priority Health's Disease Management Program currently provides dedicated health information and services to nearly 13,000 people, 3,000 of whom are enrolled in the Asthma Management Program. Working collaboratively with Primary Care Providers, Priority Health RN Case Managers provide education, counseling and assist in the management of patients with chronic conditions.

Priority Health's Asthma Management Program was named one of the top two in the nation by Tufts University School of Medicine at the American Alliance of Health Plans' National Summit to Improve Asthma Care. Tufts University examined programs from 40 health plans throughout the country as part of its "Managed Care and Asthma Initiative" project.

Priority Health is one of the largest managed care organizations in the state serving 366,000 members and over 5,000 employers throughout Western and Northern Michigan. Its 27-county service area includes a network of 3,000 physicians and 28 hospitals. The health plan enjoys "Excellent" accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance, an independent organization that reviews the quality of health plans nationwide. Priority Health is owned by Spectrum Health of Grand Rapids, Holland Community Hospital of Holland, Munson Healthcare of Traverse City and Healthshare, Inc. of Petoskey.

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