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Biotech Executives Discover Important Lessons About Employee Health and Workforce Productivity

Friday, Apr. 25, 2008

Intercare Hosts Discussion Showcasing Innovative Benefit Strategies That Maximize ROI and Enhance Company Success

Attendees at BayBio2008 learned about value-based benefits, one of today's fastest growing trends in the health care and biotech industries. At the core of a value-based approach is the concept that benefits should be viewed as a corporate investment rather than as an expense. Organizations with this mindset are in a better position to offer programs that enhance employee health and productivity, which ultimately positively impact company success.

BayBio2008: Doing Well by Doing Right - this year's annual one-day conference focused on Northern California's strength in the life sciences arena - was held on Thursday, April 17 at the South San Francisco Conference Center in South San Francisco, Calif. The event drew nearly 500 attendees from major biotech companies based in the Bay Area and beyond. Various sessions showcased case studies and actual company experiences. Each provided insights and practical skills important to a broad range of professionals from these life sciences-focused organizations.

The panel presentation on employee benefits - "The Importance of Shifting Your Focus from Cost to Investment" - featured various perspectives on the topic and included participants from health plan, employer/payer, insurance company/carrier, and pharmaceutical organizations. The panel moderator was John Kahle, chief wellness officer for Intercare Insurance Solutions, a California-based employee benefits consultant. Intercare was the only benefits broker invited to present at this event.

"Since the ever increasing cost of health care is a top-of-mind topic for executives in all industries, the session on employee benefits was relevant and valuable for our audience," said Matt Gardner, president for BayBio. "The presentation focused on how companies, including those in biotechnology, can use their employee benefits program to enhance the health and productivity of their workforce. The discussion showcased innovative benefit strategies that have been proven to improve the return on investment for benefits offered."

In addition to the moderator, panel speakers included Christina J. Barrington, PharmD., director of pharmacy services for Health Alliance Medical Plans (a division of Carle Clinic); Ardis J. Belknap, human resources manager for the City of Springfield; Christopher M. Hogan, regional manager for GreatWest Life; and Gregg Peterson, executive corporate account director for the managed markets division of GlaxoSmithKline. These panelists shared insights about everything from how health care benefits can create barriers to access that negatively impact employee health to how benefit design can positively influence employee behaviors.

"Taking a new approach to employee benefits can help biotech and other organizations attract and retain the highest caliber workforce available," said Kahle. "And this goes a long way toward helping companies be more competitive. I was thrilled to moderate this panel discussion and assist California's leading biotech companies learn more about the important connection between employee benefits, health and productivity, and success."