A Special Message From Mamie Segall

Dear Friends of The Action Group,

By now I expect you have heard the news that our Board and members have voted to dissolve The Action Group, effective at the end of September.

We entered 2020 with great enthusiasm about our strategy to reshape The Action Group and plans were well underway -- until the pandemic hit, upending everyone's plans, including ours.

While the Board of Directors and our members retain a strong commitment to our mission, the challenges presented by COVID-19 require our members and supporters to face competing priorities with scarce resources that impact their ability to support and engage with The Action Group sustainably.

Although my tenure at The Action Group has been brief, I am proud to have been part of an organization that has served for over three decades as the collective voice of employer purchasers who pay the bills for health care in Minnesota. And I'm proud of our members who have worked to successfully break new ground and bring sharper focus to advancing health care affordability, improving quality, and measuring outcomes.

As long-time member and Board Chair, Ken Horstman has said, "I can say with confidence we will all be forever proud of our collective efforts to change and improve health care for all Minnesotans." We are also confident that our members will carry the legacy of The Action Group forward and continue to demand high-quality, fair and equitable health care for all.

A Q&A about the dissolution is posted to the website, but if you have further questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Wishing you well,

Mamie Segall

Learn From Your Peers in NEW Case Study Live Podcasts

The Action Group's "Case Study Live" podcasts offer a
fun and unique way to learn how several Minnesota employers are helping employees be their "best self" physically and mentally at work.

Case studies from AiRCare Health, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, and Pops Diabetes Care are now available so listeners can learn more about how these organizations are offering innovative life-enhancing solutions.

Click on the image above to read all of the case studies!

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**Health Plan Improvements Since 2019 eValue8 Mental Health Deep Dive**

The Action Group, in collaboration with the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions, conducted the eValue8 Mental Health Deep Dive for Minnesota health plans in 2019.

Participating health plans Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, HealthPartners, and Medica recently provided updates on their admirable progress, each one expressing thanks for the 2019 eValue8 benchmarks.

Employers were also reminded of the importance of facilitating ongoing discussions with their health plans about mental health care expectations and encouraged to use the Model Data Request Form to understand their employees' experience with mental health care.

Be sure to check out all of The Action Group's mental health resources and to download those you want to retain for future use before the website shuts down in September.

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**Will the COVID-19 Pandemic Leave a Mental Health Crisis in its Wake?** *(U.S. News & World Report, July 6, 2020)*

**Those with Mental Health and Addiction Challenges Face Enormous Obstacles to Care** *(The Kennedy Forum, July 6, 2020)*

**High Anxiety and Stress: Legislation to Improve Mental Health During Crisis** *(Former U.S. Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy testimony before the Congressional Subcommittee on Health, June 30, 2020)*

**New Mental Health Index Cites Risk of Addiction, Depressive Disorder, and PTSD Doubled Since Beginning of COVID-19 Crisis** *(Total Brain, May 19, 2020)*

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**Minnesota Health Care Disparities Report Now Available**

MN Community Measurement (MNCM) has released two new reports highlighting disparities in health care quality in Minnesota.

The reports use a unique data source to examine disparities in quality measures for
preventive care and care for chronic conditions.

"Through its statewide data collection, MN CM has an ability to measure health care disparities that is unique in the nation," says Julie Sonier, MN CM president and CEO. "Tragically, we are seeing the ways health disparities can affect outcomes during the coronavirus pandemic..."

The National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions recently launched a special initiative to make race, health and equity resources available to employers. Learn more here.

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**New Study Reveals U.S. Employers' Return to Work Strategies**

U.S. employers are making plans to ensure their employees can safely return to work during the pandemic, with 90% considering a phased re-entry and 88% having a multi-disciplinary task force in place.

These are among the findings of a May 2020 survey from the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions, conducted to support regional coalitions and employers and benchmark re-opening strategies in the face of COVID-19.

"In general, employees who can work from home will continue to do so for the foreseeable future," says Mike Thompson, National Alliance president and CEO. "Other employees will return to the workplace in a phased manner to mitigate risk."

View the survey results here and other COVID-19 employer resources here.

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**THOUGHT for the Week**

"During times of increased social distancing, people can still maintain social connections and care for their mental health. Phone calls or video chats lessen loneliness and isolation."

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Coping with Stress During COVID-19

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The Minnesota Health Action Group is a coalition of public and private purchasers whose sole purpose is to represent the collective voice of those who pay the bills for health care in Minnesota. Action Group members collaborate with community stakeholders to drive innovations that support high-quality health care, create engaged consumers, and ensure the economic vitality of all Minnesota communities. Based in Bloomington, MN, the Minnesota Health Action Group was formed in 1988 as the Buyers Health Care Action Group. To learn more, visit www.mnhealthactiongroup.org. Follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter: @actiongroupmn