

**The Reporters:****Barbara Benson:** (718) 855-3304**Gale Scott:** (212) 210-0746*Crain's Health Pulse* is available Monday through Friday by 6 a.m.**Reproduction, forwarding or reuse in any form is prohibited.**

For customer service, call (888) 909-9111.

**Today's News** Monday, March 16, 2009**SurgiCare Decision Postponed**

At the request of the applicant, the Public Health Council voted to defer a vote on SurgiCare of Manhattan's request to open a surgery center on East 42nd Street specializing in ambulatory care. At a previous meeting, the PHC asked the 14 doctors behind SurgiCare to go back to the negotiating table with Lenox Hill Hospital, where the majority of them have privileges. On Friday, council member Susan Regan took a vote on the deferral because "we have since learned there are discussions." Negotiations could produce a deal as early as today.

**Enrollment Grant Targets Children**

The New York State Department of Health is getting \$1 million over four years from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to boost enrollment of eligible children in Child Health Plus and Medicaid and to retain them as enrollees. The grant is part of a new national RWJF program, Maximizing Enrollment for Kids, which provides states with funding and technical support to increase enrollment and retention. DOH's grant will fund an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the state's enrollment and renewal systems, policies and procedures, and provide technical assistance to improve them.

**Aetna's List of Specialties' Costs**

Aetna is adding cost information for eight health specialties to help members comparison shop when they get elective care. The company already lists physician-specific prices for some 30 common services and procedures, such as routine office visits and X-rays. It also lists hospital-specific charges for more than 30 medical procedures, such as colonoscopies, and common hospital admissions, like maternity care. The expanded information includes data on optometrists, physical therapists, podiatrists, audiologists and others. Aetna's "health care transparency tools" are listed on the Aetna Navigator Web site.

**Daily reminders on primary care's importance**

It may not cost millions of dollars, and it may not feature a blind disabled person. But a new campaign by the Primary Care Coalition—like primary care itself—is seen as a low-cost way to save lives.

Starting today, the coalition is debuting a Primary Care Statistic of the Day campaign, meant to use plain language to illustrate the benefits of a sound primary care system in New York. As part of the effort, the coalition is sending news outlets a single statistic each day through April, timed to the budget debate in Albany. Today's tidbit: Health care costs incurred by American adults who have a personal primary care physician are 33% lower.

"We don't have any money to do a real campaign," says Elizabeth Swain, chief executive of the Community Health Care Association of New York State.

Unlike hospitals, primary care does not attract big donors who can get their name on a new wing to fight a specific disease. Hence the low-budget campaign.

"People don't celebrate wellness," Ms. Swain adds. "They celebrate the cure of an awful disease more than the prevention of that awful disease."

Ms. Swain's message echoes the state's reform agenda: New York must invest in primary care to get better health outcomes for its residents. The coalition's other members include the Primary Care Development Corp. and the New York State Academy of Family Physicians.

**At A Glance**

**HEALTH REFORM:** The New York Academy of Medicine is hosting a panel discussion on health care reform on April 7 from 5:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Presenters include Jeffrey Levi, executive director, Trust for America's Health; Dr. Guthrie Birkhead, deputy commissioner, the Office of Public Health at the state Department of Health; and Dr. Farzad Mostashari, assistant commissioner at the city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. To get more information and to register, visit [www.nyam.org/events](http://www.nyam.org/events).

ADVERTISEMENT

**ATLANTIS HEALTH PLAN**

**THE HEALTH PLAN FOR THIS ECONOMY**

Call 718-HEALTHY for more information

[www.atlantishp.com](http://www.atlantishp.com)

A New York, NY based company

