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Global Health Media / NewsWire Release

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HISTORIC SUMMIT DEVELOPS PLAN FOR NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL COACHES IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Consumers & Physicians Will Benefit from National Certification of Health and Wellness Coaches

Wellesley, MA—20 October, 2010-- Seventy leaders in the medical, nursing, psychology, health education, research, credentialing, academic, coach training, and coaching fields came together in an historic summit to establish a plan for national standards for the education and certification of professional health and wellness coaches.

Supported by a grant from The Institute for Integrative Health, the Summit on Standards & Credentialing of Professional Coaches in Healthcare & Wellness took place September 26-27 in Wellesley, Massachusetts. The Summit was led by co-chairs Margaret Moore, co-director of the Institute of Coaching and CEO of Wellcoaches Corporation, and Karen Lawson, MD, Director of Health Coaching at the University of Minnesota.

Seventy percent of today's healthcare costs are related to preventable lifestyle-related diseases. There is an urgent need for well-educated, skilled, credentialed coaches to help shift the focus of healthcare from illness and repair to wellness and prevention, empowering individuals to take control of their own health and well-being.

"Health and wellness coaches will play an integral role in the prevention portion of healthcare reform legislation – they will help catalyze a transformation in healthcare," explained Pamela Peeke MD, MPH, national spokesperson for the American College of Sports Medicine's "Exercise is Medicine" campaign and advisor to the U.S. Surgeon General. "The time is now for a new model of care--one that is relationship-centered and prevention focused, and health and wellness coaches are leading the way."

Presently, the title of "health coach" and "wellness coach" can be used by anyone, whether or not they have completed coach training designed for health and wellness coaches. Furthermore, coach training programs vary widely, from short online courses and weekend workshops, to a three-year academic masters-level program. This poses a challenge for consumers seeking to find a credible and certified coach to guide them toward their goals for a healthy lifestyle. Medical care providers also need to know that

they are referring their patients to appropriately trained and certified coaching professionals.

The Summit leaders confirmed that the best-trained coaches are those who are skilled at partnering with consumers over the long term as they replace unhealthy behaviors with those that will optimize and sustain healthy living.

Critical action steps that were outlined at this historic Summit include:

- Create an independent national certification board to develop standards and certification for the professional health and wellness coach, as well as standards for basic coaching skills that all health professionals including nurses, physicians, physical therapists, dietitians, social workers, and personal trainers can integrate into their professional work;
- Pursue research studies to determine the health outcomes of coaching, including a multi-site study of the impact of health and wellness coaching on prevention or amelioration of chronic conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease;
- Engage and encourage collaboration and partnerships with other professional organizations and government agencies to expand consensus and momentum;
- Establish a professional association to support the development of this new profession, foster research, develop science-based coaching practices, maintain effective communication with government relations, and support community building and networking.

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Organizations Participating in Summit

American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
American Association of Diabetes Educators
American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine
Academic Consortium for Complementary and Alternative Health Care
American College of Sports Medicine
American Holistic Nurses Association
American Holistic Nurses Credentialing Commission
American Occupational Nurses Association
Bar-Ilan University, Israel
Blue Cross Blue Shield Massachusetts
Case Management Society of America
Logan College of Chiropractic
Cleveland Clinic
Duke Integrative Medicine
GlaxoSmithKline
Harvard Medical School
- Massachusetts General Hospital
- Osher Research Center
- Institute of Lifestyle Medicine
- McLean Hospital
Harvard Vanguard Medical Association
HealthCorps
Healthy Howard

Integrative Nursing Institute
Integrative Medicine Institute
International Association of Coaches
International Coach Federation
International Nurse Coach Association
Iowa Chronic Care Consortium
Medica
Mayo Clinic
National Wellness Institute
Nightingale Initiative of Global Health
Optimal Health and Prevention Research Foundation
Preventive Cardiology Nurses Association
RN Patient Advocates LLC
RMIT University (Australia)
Sacramento Center Health and Healing
Society of Behavioral Medicine
Tai Sophia University
University of Bridgeport
University of California San Diego
University of Minnesota, Center for Spirituality & Healing
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
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