

## Annual Cigna Forum Brings Denver-Area Business Leaders Together to Explore Health Improvement and Children's Mental Health

DENVER, August 07, 2014 - At a recent conference hosted by Cigna (NYSE: CI), nearly 150 Denver-area employers and brokers met to address two key issues impacting the health of Colorado's population: health improvement in the workplace and the mental health of Colorado's children and teens.

"Cigna is committed to driving health improvement and lowering costs by offering our employer clients a variety of benefit options, including consumer-driven health plans, incentivized wellness strategies and networks that reward quality and effectiveness," Kim Bimestefer, president and general manager for Cigna in Colorado, stated to the attendees. "We work closely with each employer client to understand their unique needs and provide customized solutions to meet those needs."

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 52,000 children in Colorado live with serious mental health issues. In fact, according to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, suicide is the second-leading cause of death for youth (ages 10-24) in the state.

During the forum, **Stuart Lustig, M.D.**, Cigna's lead medical director for child and adolescent behavioral health, talked about the rise in mental health issues among Colorado's children and teens. He also shared key findings from the [Cigna Foundation - NAMI Forum](#), held in Washington D.C. in June, including the need to expand access to mental health services throughout the community. For example, offering mental health programs in schools gives kids the opportunity to receive care in a familiar environment and can aid in early detection and treatment. To view a full replay of the forum, please visit [www.NAMI.org/childrensmhforum](http://www.NAMI.org/childrensmhforum).

**Susan Birch**, executive director of the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, encouraged attendees to consider how they can help improve the health of their communities. Keynote speaker **Dr. Terry Wahls**, clinical professor of medicine at the University of Iowa, talked about the science behind health improvement and discussed how diet and lifestyle contribute to chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and multiple sclerosis.

Attendees also learned ways to manage health care costs, such as identifying physicians that provide quality, cost-effective care and creating benefit designs that encourage employees to seek care at places that offer the best value. Other topics covered at the forum included an overview of private exchanges and how they can impact employers and an introduction to Cigna's private retail exchange in Colorado.

Patricia Maley, first vice president and director of human resources for [CoBiz Financial](#), talked about the company's work with Cigna to implement a health and wellness strategy. Notable achievements included increasing the number of employees that completed annual physicals to 95 percent and having more than half of the staff (57 percent) complete health risk assessments.

"The key to our success is the support and endorsement of our executive team," said Maley. "Our leaders are directly involved in our wellness program, which helps drive employee engagement in health and wellness activities."

CoBiz Financial was one of three companies to receive the annual **Cigna Well-Being Award** for their commitment to creating a culture of health through their wellness program. [AlloSource](#) and [Associates in Family Medicine](#) were also selected as winners. Six companies were among the finalists, including City of Westminster, Oakwood Homes, Sorin Group, Sterling-Rice Group, Sunrise Medical and Weld County Government.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. employers lose more than \$225 billion each year in productivity due to employee health problems. Cigna created the Well-Being Award to recognize employer clients that have a positive impact on the health and well-being of their workforce.

## **About Cigna**

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