

YOUR GUIDE TO THE 16<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NMHCC

## McClellan: "We need your help"

by Jill Wechsler, Washington Bureau Chief

Yesterday, the Keynote Presentation, *The Great Election Divide: What's on the Health Care Ballot in 2004?*, was presented



Dr. Mark McClellan

Dr. Mark McClellan, administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), opened the second day of the National Managed Health Care Congress by emphasizing the need for managed care executives to assist his agency in implementing the highly complex Medicare legislation. In describing how the new program will offer new choices for seniors to obtain

"reliable access to widespread and varied health plans," Dr. McClellan acknowledged that CMS faces a "major task" in developing regulations and policies to establish the new prescription drug coverage and Medicare Advantage (MA) program.

Although the greatest expansion of the Medicare Advantage program will occur in 2006, Dr. McClellan noted that the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) already is providing expanded benefits to seniors. He pointed to MA plans in San Francisco that are expanding coverage of brand-name drugs and reducing premiums and copays for beneficiaries. Because of increased Medicare payments to MCOs, MA plans across the country are expanding benefits and reducing out-of-pocket costs for seniors.

To establish the expanded MA program in two years, Dr. McClellan explained that CMS hopes to issue proposed regulations on the major provisions in the law in a few months. The aim is to get a system in place well ahead of the 2006 start date for the program so that MCOs will have ample time to study and prepare for the new opportunities it will offer plans and patients. Dr. McClellan asked the audi-

ence to submit comments on how to implement the new program to help CMS "get it right." One of the key issues to be addressed in the upcoming regulations will be how CMS should establish geographic regions for MA plans to serve. In response to a question on this issue, Dr. McClellan emphasized that his office was examining all the relevant evidence on the impact of different regional definitions and will present a range of views on these options, along with the CMS proposal.

Dr. McClellan acknowledged that critics of the MA program claim that Medicare managed care plans are too costly. To address these concerns, CMS is taking a broader look at what Medicare beneficiaries pay for care and how that relates to the total cost of healthcare. He noted that many Medicare beneficiaries prefer the Medicare fee-for-service program. But he pointed out that the latest evidence shows that Medicare enrollees in MA plans receive better benefits and pay less out-of-pocket. New data indicates that the average Medicare fee-for-service beneficiary pays \$400 a month for healthcare, compared with \$260 a month for MA plan enrollees. Dr. McClellan observed that such analysis

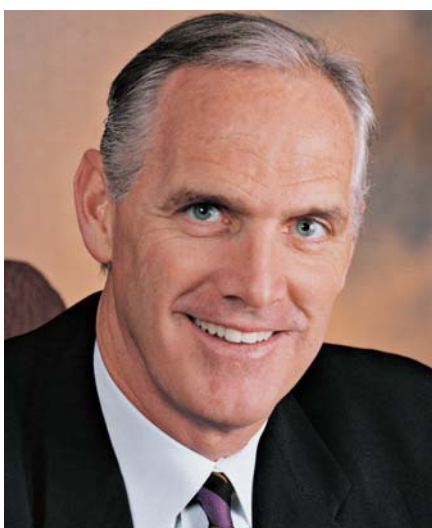
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## Readers choose Hilferty as top thought leader

By Izabella Iizuka, Contributing Editor



Daniel J. Hilferty, CEO of AmeriHealth Mercy Health Plan, Philadelphia

After months of suspense, the results of the MANAGED HEALTHCARE EXECUTIVE 2003 Readers' Choice Executive of the Year were finally announced.

Daniel J. Hilferty, CEO of AmeriHealth Mercy Health Plan in Philadelphia, tallied the highest number of reader votes and was presented the Executive of the Year award during a gala reception last night at the Washington Fairmont's Colonnade Room. Each of the 12 CEOs and thought leaders featured on the covers of MHE in 2003 were eligible in the online poll.

"It was a tremendous honor to be named Executive of the Year by the readers of MANAGED HEALTHCARE EXECUTIVE," Hilferty said. "It was an impressive group of candidates, and all of them have

made important contributions to the American healthcare delivery system."

Mike McCue, the magazine's editor-in-chief, said the voter turnout exceeded expectations and that the number of votes received for all 12 candidates made the contest very close.

"It was obvious from the beginning that none of the candidates was going to run away with the Readers' Choice Award," he said during the reception. "It just goes to show that even though one candidate would accumulate the most votes, they all struck a chord among our readers. Each and every one of them is worthy of the award based on their contributions and dedication to improving healthcare for every American."

Nearly 100 guests attended the recep-

tion, including Dr. Edson Bueno, CEO of Amil Health Plan in Rio de Janeiro, who traveled more than 6,000 miles to attend the event. In addition to Dr. Bueno, the other executives featured on the covers in 2003 included Dartmouth's Dr. John Wennberg, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, Mike Cascone Jr., of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida, Harvard University's Regina Herzlinger, Dr. Larry Cook of Passport Health Plan, Kent Clapp of Medical Mutual of Ohio, David Olikier of MVP Health Plan, H.R. Brereton "Gubby" Barlow of Premiera Blue Cross, Cleve Killingsworth (then of Health Alliance Plan), and Joe Anderson of Schaller Anderson.

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## ON THE INSIDE

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Plan your day around the NMHCC schedule of today's events.		Attendees offer their reviews of show presentations.		This guide offers a restaurant to please just about everyone.		Walk the show floor with this alphabetized listing of exhibitors.		These comprehensive panels bring together all stakeholders.		Mergers and acquisitions will change the healthcare landscape.	