



Nonprofit Publisher
of Consumer Reports

**Statement of Chuck Bell, Programs Director
Consumers Union, publisher of *Consumer Reports*
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Good Morning,

I'm Chuck Bell and I am the Programs Director of Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of Consumer Reports, based in Yonkers, NY. I am appearing here today both for Consumers Union and the Consumer-Purchaser Disclosure Project, a broad national coalition of consumer, labor and employer organizations that supports improved disclosure and reporting of health care performance information about physicians, doctors, and medical treatments.

Today I am very pleased to stand here with Attorney General Cuomo, the AMA, Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield and WellPoint to acknowledge this important victory for consumer rights.

Insurance companies routinely collect substantial information about the quality of care delivered by physicians that could be very useful to consumers and employers. However, it is vital that this information be measured and reported in a fair and accurate way. Insurance companies that publish physician performance information should disclose their data collection and reporting methods, and be accountable. Consumers need to know how these systems are devised, and how doctors are being evaluated. Measures of cost and quality should be clearly delineated, so the consumer can tell what is being measured and what it means.

Two and a half weeks ago, Attorney General Cuomo established an innovative model for physician performance reporting programs that achieved all of these goals, with the broad support of physician, consumer and purchaser stakeholders. Today, we are starting a new phase as we witness this model being applied throughout New York State and rolled out across the country to consumers everywhere.

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Throughout this process, Attorney General Cuomo has worked hard to assure that these agreements will protect the consumer interest in valid and accurate information, and meet the needs of doctors, employers and health plans. Working together, we are very pleased to say there is now a fair model for these programs to adhere to, that we believe can win very broad acceptance from consumer and purchaser groups, as well as from physicians and health plans.

By promoting this model together as one group we are sending a message to the insurance community -- this is the standard that best serves customers, that a broad range of stakeholders can enthusiastically support. This is the model that should be adopted as a standard for insurance and health plan reporting programs across the marketplace.

I want to again thank Attorney General Cuomo for standing up on behalf of consumers across the country, the AMA and MSSNY for working with us on creating this model and Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield and WellPoint for being a leader in the industry and adopting this model nationwide.

Thank you.

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