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Nationally Recognized Houston Independent School District Taps Avizent for Workers' Comp TPA Services

Award-winning workers' comp program manager values company's commitment to innovation

COLUMBUS, Ohio (April 13, 2010) — National claims and risk management service provider Avizent announced today that it has been selected by the Houston Independent School District (HISD) to manage its workers' compensation claims. HISD, with more than 300 schools and 31,000 employees, is the seventh largest public school system in the nation and the largest in Texas.

"Our goal is simply to create the best possible programs for our employees while we carefully manage tax payer dollars," notes Tom Dolan, Manager of HISD's Workers' Compensation Program. "The District's programs are innovative, dynamic and non-traditional. We needed a vendor who was willing to work with us to expand our workers' comp program, and develop new and even more innovative approaches. Avizent fits the bill as a company willing to work with us to create a true partnership for success."

Since the early 1990s, HISD has been known as one of the nation's leading innovators in workers' comp programs. Prior to starting its workers' comp initiatives, the District followed the trend of other municipalities in Texas experiencing skyrocketing double-digit medical cost increases and an average lost time of 22 to 23 weeks. "It wasn't a pretty picture," recalls Dolan.

About 10 years ago, the District began re-examining its processes, considering options such as transitional duty, the introduction of concurrent workers' comp and family medical leave, and targeted programs to address high expense areas. Average lost time is now under four weeks and medical costs have consistently decreased.

HISD credits its success to a number of factors, including its emphasis on business partnerships. One of the District's current business partners is Houston-based Rockport Healthcare Group, a specialty PPO network focused exclusively on workers' comp.

While Texas allows injured workers to seek care from any provider they choose, the District encourages the use of credentialed providers – those who meet strict criteria including experience in treating workers' comp injuries, location and professional history. They also educate their employees on the benefits of using these providers.

With its new relationship with Avizent, HISD will continue to build its certified network, expand medical treatment protocols, continue the close working relationship with the adjusters and case managers housed within HISD, and target other strategies to control medical expenses.

Another key initiative for HISD is the creation of provider performance measurements, which will be developed using advanced scientific methodology and analysis. "We believe that the injured employee should be able to make an informed choice selecting the medical provider who offers the best outcomes," notes Dolan. "Additionally, by freely offering medical outcomes to the provider community, we will provide

a transparent accountability and hopefully achieve a collegial best practices expectation. We will work with Rockport, Avizent and our other business partners to develop and implement this progressive strategy.”

Dolan acknowledges that the TPA review process for the District was arduous and time-consuming. They had an existing TPA and included some of the nation’s top workers’ comp vendors in their review. “Winning HISD’s business is not easy; we aren’t looking for companies that can simply process claims,” he states. “We asked a lot of unorthodox questions because we wanted to make sure the management teams at our business partners share our passion. During the review process, Avizent rose to the challenge. They have the experience and commitment to take our program to the next level.”

About Houston Independent School District

The Houston Independent School District (HISD), with more than 199,500 students and encompassing 301 square miles within greater Houston, is the seventh largest public school system in the nation; and with over 300 schools, it is the largest in Texas. HISD is also the largest employer in Houston, with approximately 31,000 full- and part-time employees. For more information, visit www.houstonisd.org.

About Avizent

Avizent, based in Columbus, Ohio, is one of the fastest growing national risk management service providers. They offer claims management, medical managed care, alternative risk options and RMIS technology. The company has offices in 40 locations across the United States. For additional information, please visit www.avizentrisk.com or call 888-646-9675. You can also follow Thomas Watson, Avizent’s CEO, on Twitter at [TWatson_Avizent](https://twitter.com/TWatson_Avizent).

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