



**Buyers Health Care Action Group's Choice Plus report "Consumer Survey Results 2000" provides basic information about survey methodology in the front of the report**

## About the Consumer Survey

### Who sponsored the survey?

The survey featured in this booklet was sponsored jointly by the Buyers Health Care Action Group (see company list on inside front cover of this booklet) and the State of Minnesota Department of Employee Relations. Some of those surveyed were employees of companies that are part of BHCAG, and some were state employees.

### What did the survey ask about?

The survey asked people questions about experiences with their clinic and medical care in 1998. It asked them about things they know best, such as whether it's been easy to get the care they need, and whether doctors explain things in a way they can understand. The survey did not ask about technical things that are hard for patients to judge, such as how well a doctor performs surgery.

### When and how was the survey done?

The survey was completed mostly by mail from March to May 1999. It was done by an independent survey organization — not by the Care Systems or clinics. The survey company selected people at random to be in the survey, and kept the survey confidential so that people could say what they really think.

### How many people participated in the survey?

More than 16,000 people participated in the survey. For each Care System, this booklet shows survey results for about 325 adults who told about their own health care and 325 parents who told about their children's care.

*See page 36 for more information about the survey and how it was done.*



*BHCAG and the State of Minnesota used a new questionnaire for this year's consumer survey, based on a new national standardized survey. Because of this change, the results from this year's survey cannot be compared to results from earlier years.*



... and the report includes more detailed methodological details in the back of the booklet. (pages 36 & 37)

Provided by Buyers Health Care Action Group

## Notes

This final section gives additional information about the survey and this report.

### How the survey was done

The survey was done mostly by mail from March to May 1999. People who did not send back the mail survey were asked to complete the survey by telephone. Fifty-eight percent of the people chosen for the survey completed it by mail or by telephone.

The CareNorth and St. Mary's/Duluth Clinic health systems participated in a similar survey project in the fall of 1998. Instead of re-surveying the patients of these care systems, the 1998 survey results were included in this report. Survey results for children are not included for these two care systems because the 1998 project did not include a child survey. Results are also not included for adults in these two systems for the topic "Getting referrals and care." One of the questions included under this topic was not part of the 1998 survey.

### Sample sizes

For a few care systems, sample sizes were smaller than the typical size of 325 because of smaller enrollment or a higher percentage of people choosing not to participate in the survey.

For the Hennepin Faculty Associates Care System, there were not enough people among BHCAG member company employees or state employees to complete the sample. Additional respondents were drawn randomly from among other people, not covered by Medicare or Medicaid, who received their care at this Care System. This sample of patients closely matched the rest of the survey sample.

### How Care Systems were compared

The summary charts tell which Care System scores were significantly better or worse than the survey average for each topic. For these summary charts, Care Systems in the Twin Cities metro area were compared only against other Twin Cities metro area Care Systems. Care Systems outside the Twin Cities metro area were compared only against other Care Systems outside the Twin Cities metro area.

There were some minor differences from one Care System to another in the mix of people who were surveyed. When Care Systems were compared to see which ones scored better or worse than the survey average, statistical adjustments were made so that differences in age and self-reported health status would not affect these comparisons. These adjustments were not made to the bar graphs.



## Adjustments to Care System classifications

In a few instances, differences in sample size and the effects of rounding caused two Care Systems with the same average score to be classified differently. In these instances, the lower Care System classification was adjusted to match the higher Care System classification in the summary charts (on pages 10-11 and 24-25).

## Margin of error

Like any survey based on a sample, this survey has a margin of error. The statistical comparisons in the summary comparison chart take this margin of error into account, using a confidence level of 95%. The numbers in the bar graphs do not. So when you compare the percentages in the bar graphs, you should ignore small percentage differences. These small differences may reflect sampling variation rather than real differences.

Since people who were surveyed answered only the questions about experiences they had in 1998, the number of people who answered questions varied from topic to topic. The margin of error for the survey is higher for topics that were answered by smaller numbers of people, and it is higher for the Care Systems that had fewer than the usual 325 respondents.

## Survey results reflect only the opinions of those who were surveyed

The survey results in this booklet represent the opinions and judgments of people employed by the member companies of the Buyers Health Care Action Group and people employed by the State of Minnesota. They do not represent the evaluations of the sponsoring organizations (the Buyers Health Care Action Group and the State of Minnesota Department of Employee Relations). Your own experience with a clinic or Care System could be different from those of the people who were surveyed.

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## Acknowledgements

The Buyers Health Care Action Group and the State of Minnesota Department of Employee Relations want to thank the Minnesota Health Data Institute for:

- Sharing the results from their 1998 Northeast Minnesota survey project; and
- Serving as the project managers for this survey project.

We also thank the employees of Carlson Companies, Jostens and the Minnesota Department of Employee Relations who gave their reactions to early drafts of this booklet.

We are grateful to the more than 16,000 people who took time to share their experiences and opinions by participating in this survey.