

**Company Contact**

Doug Markham  
Rockport Healthcare Group  
615-221-2625  
dmarkham@rhgnet.com

**Media Contact**

Joy Scott  
Scott Public Relations  
818-610-0270  
joy@scottpublicrelations.com

**Rockport Healthcare Group's Adaptation to Changes in Workers' Compensation Marketplace  
Drives Significant Growth**

*Direct Provider Contract Expansion and Signing of 10<sup>th</sup> Workers' Compensation Network Partnership  
Signifies Once Regional Work Comp PPO Network has Gained National Presence*

**HOUSTON, TX (April 15, 2009)** — With a flexible network of directly contracted providers and the signing of its 10th network partnership agreement in two years, Rockport Healthcare Group continues on a strong growth trajectory as one of the few dedicated workers' compensation Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) networks in the nation. Recent partnerships helping to expand the company's reach to all 50 states include MagnaCare Administrative Services, InterGroup Services and Indiana Health Network.

The company's growth coincides with the move by self-insured employers away from integrated managed care networks, popular just a few years ago, to networks specializing solely in workers' compensation managed care. It also highlights the importance of strong network partnerships to ensure employers and employees have adequate access to quality providers.

"Over the past few years, there has been a growing recognition that workers' compensation is a system that must not only ensure the prompt, safe return of employees to productivity, it is equally important to ensure adherence to the many complex and always-changing state and federal regulations," said Doug Markham, Chief Operating Officer of Rockport. "Traditional managed care networks often lack the expertise to provide their clients with the guidance and results needed within the workers' compensation marketplace. Rockport understands the challenges of today's employers, and provides the quality programs needed to return employees to work quickly and safely."

Markham attributes Rockport's growth to the company's strong network partnerships and to its flexibility, which together allow the company to develop highly tailored programs for clients. Such flexibility recently helped the company expand its business with a large national retailer. "The retailer wanted to create a flexible system that included leased networks in some states and a customized, directly contracted provider network in other states. With the past vendor, the retailer felt boxed into a one-size-fits-all approach," stated Markham. "We began working with the retailer in four states – when we told them we'd be happy to build a highly flexible network, and when we increased service in other areas, we not only got the business, we quickly grew to working with the company in 35 states."

The move toward dedicated workers' compensation providers coincides with the slumping economy and a dynamic marketplace that includes complex challenges for employers. Historically, fraud within the workers' compensation industry increases during economic downturns. Industry analysts today predict fewer overall claims, yet an increase in claim frequency and the length of time injured workers remain out. Examples of the types of claims employers might now be seeing include a return of previous injuries "acting up" and claims not reported in a timely manner (making investigations more difficult).

Further compounding the difficulties for employers in today's marketplace is the reality that many workers' compensation vendors, third party administrators and insurers are also affected by the current economic environment. As a result, there have been numerous consolidations and vendors downsizing, often leading to decreases in service levels.

Key recommendations for developing strong workers' compensation programs in a difficult economy include:

- Implement highly operational programs focused on prompt report of injury.
- Ensure injured workers are seen by quality, credentialed providers that specialize in a specific injury or illness.
- Provide appropriate-level and flexible coverage across the U.S.
- Understand and adhere to all state/federal guidelines.
- Ensure your vendors, from PPOs to claims service providers, adhere to strict quality control measurements.

Markham believes that it is Rockport's commitment to network partnerships and strong customer service that is helping the company grow in a tumultuous marketplace. "Creating successful workers' compensation programs doesn't come from the largest vendor; it comes from working with companies willing to create programs that meet the needs of each business and its injured workers. In today's market, employers may need cardiologists or even psychologists to help employees deal with anxiety and post-traumatic stress," notes Markham. "The goal is to return employees to work quickly and safely and to achieve that, injured workers must have access to the best care and specialists possible."

**About Rockport Healthcare Group:**

Rockport Healthcare Group manages a national preferred provider organization network of over 400,000 providers that serves the workers' compensation medical management sector with offices in Texas, Tennessee, Florida and Missouri. The company's single focus of specializing in workers' compensation has resulted in a network of medical providers who understand early intervention, return-to-work guidelines and other industry-specific treatment protocols. For additional information, contact Doug Markham at 800-734-4460 or visit [www.rockporthealthcare.com](http://www.rockporthealthcare.com).