MedSolutions Introduces Spine Surgery Management Program

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FRANKLIN, Tenn., July 21, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- **MedSolutions** [1], a leading provider of medical management services, today announced the launch of its Lumbar Spine Surgery Management Program for ensuring the clinical appropriateness of spine surgery for individuals suffering from lower back pain, spinal stenosis, spondylolisthesis, scoliosis, trauma, infections and degenerative disc disease.

It has been estimated that up to 80 percent of the population experiences low back pain during their lifetime, making it the second most common reason for doctor's visits.(1) According to an analysis conducted by the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project, America's payors spend $18.8 billion(2) a year to treat low back pain with lumbar spinal fusion surgery, a procedure that immobilizes painful vertebrae by fusing one or more of the bones.

Despite its growing popularity, recent studies have suggested spinal fusion surgery can produce poor outcomes and may be unnecessarily prescribed for many patients. According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Medicare patients with spinal stenosis who underwent complex fusion, a procedure in which two or more vertebrae were fused, were nearly three-times more likely to have life-threatening complications than patients who had a less invasive procedure known as decompression.(3)

Another study showed that patients who had spinal fusion surgery were less likely to return to work within two years after their surgery than patients with similar conditions who did not have surgery. Their rate of permanent disability was more than five times higher and their daily intake of powerful narcotic painkillers increased by 41 percent after surgery. Furthermore, 27 percent of the patients studied underwent repeat surgeries.(4)

"Unfortunately, there is a lack of convincing evidence that surgery produces better outcomes than non-surgical
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