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## Three Physician Associations Form New Group

By JOHN COX

Wednesday, September 7, 2016



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Three locally based independent physician associations have joined to create a new, for-profit administrative organization allowing San Diego County employers to negotiate directly with more than 800 doctors covering most medical specialties.

Health Excel Inc. comprises XiMED IPA, MultiCultural Primary Care Medical Group and Greater Tri-Cities IPA, each of which will continue to operate independently even as they collaborate on contracting of the group's services and sharing of best practices.

The three groups' combination may be just the start. A Sept. 7 news release announcing Health Excel's formation said the organization "creates the opportunity for the more than 4,000 independent physicians in the greater San Diego area to share information and best practices."

XiMED's chairman, Dr. Marc Sedwitz, said in the release that although doctors aren't typically involved in the business side of medicine, "they should be," adding that Health Excel is about "giving voice to physicians."

The new group is also expected to help doctors lower malpractice insurance rates and lower their health insurance costs.

XiMED CEO Thomas Sounhein asserted several trends have come together to make conditions right for Health Excel's formation. He listed the disruption caused by broad-based efforts to control health-care costs; employer frustrations with rising health insurance rates; legal strategies allowing doctors to join in new, risk-based business models; new technologies; and medical groups' insistence that physicians be given greater control to improve patient care.

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