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## GRIPA inks deal with LiDestri Foods

By [WILL ASTOR](#)*Rochester Business Journal**October 13, 2009*

The Greater Rochester Independent Practice Association Inc. has signed a contract to provide health care to LiDestri Foods Inc. workers. The agreement is GRIPA's first agreement with an outside employer.

The roughly 600-doctor GRIPA is half-owned by its privately practicing physician members and half-owned by Rochester General Hospital. In 2007, it became one of a few U.S. IPAs to win federal certification as a clinical integration organization.

GRIPA's first and until now only clinical integration client was Rochester General Health System.

To win such certification, physician organizations have to show that they can closely coordinate care among specialists and primary care providers, laboratories, hospitals and pharmacies, tracking patients through electronic medical records. Such coordination is meant to ensure high care quality, yet keep a lid on costs.

GRIPA officials estimate employers who use its doctors to treat employees enrolled in company-funded health plans can cut per-worker medical costs by as much as \$8,000 a year.

GRIPA formed in the late 1990s as an IPA for the ViaHealth Plan, a since discontinued HMO. In recent years, the physician group has survived largely through Medicare Advantage contracts.

The private HMO-administered Medicare Advantage program is widely expected to be curtailed, perhaps sharply, in the current round of federal health care reform. Two years ago, GRIPA doctors voted to invest some \$2 million in new computer equipment and software to win clinical integration certification in hopes of redefining their organization as an exclusive medical care provider for self-funded employers.

LiDestri has four New York locations. The spaghetti sauce company employs some 400 in Fairport and 300 at other sites.

GRIPA's clinical integration program "is one of the few programs that can significantly improve the delivery of health care and at the same time actually has the potential to reduce costs for employees and the company," said Cynthia Reddeck-LiDestri M.D., Lidestri wellness program director, in a statement.

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