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From the Denver Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/denver/news/2017/04/11/new-education-platform-speeds-evolution-of-health.html>

New education platform speeds evolution of health-focused business group

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From its 1996 founding, the Colorado Business Group on Health operated as a traditional membership organization, providing business and public agencies with networking, education and special programs focused on workplace health concerns such as insurance costs. In exchange, those members paid annual dues.

But in an economy where public-sector organizations and companies are more reluctant to join organizations, the CBGH, like many similar groups, is having to evolve.

And on Wednesday it is expected to roll out a product that could redefine it and the services it provides at its largest annual gathering, the Colorado Culture of Health conference at the Colorado Convention Center.

This new effort comes just as [Donna Marshall](#), the only executive director the organization has ever had, gets ready to retire later this year.

The initiative focuses on an online learning platform that can teach human-resources benefits managers how to be more effective consumers of health insurance.



Donna Marshall, the retiring executive director of the Colorado Business Group on Health

The 11 planned “modules” — similar to courses — can count for continuing education credits through the Society of Human Resource Management.

Marshall, while still working out the specifics, believes she can charge somewhere around \$150 a credit hour for access to the material.

“It’s important for a nonprofit to have a diversified portfolio, so we’ll continue to offer other educational forums and products,” she said. “But I really think this is the beating heart of what we really believe will be the future of the organization.”

'More game-like'

The story of CBGH is not so different than many other industry-help groups. It’s attracted members with initiatives that focus on workplace health in a way that other groups don’t. It serves about 15 dues-paying members, though its events and initiatives attract a lot more businesses and governments.

But in zeroing in on a mission that could differentiate and elevate CBGH even further, Marshall reasoned that there are a minimal number of resources that can help benefit-purchasing managers know better how to structure their buying a way that allows them to save money, which is a critical skill as insurance premiums continue to rise.

And while there are plenty of classes these managers can take to be in compliance with the law, there are few seminars to sharpen their skills in designing plans that can help their companies financially, leaving many benefits managers to have to learn on the job rather than arrive with a storehouse of expertise.

Boulder-based Amplifire developed the program that CBGH is now pushing out. The platform, first devised some 10 years ago, was based on brain-centered learning and forced people to think about insurance purchasing in new ways.

The modules begin with questions to stimulate curiosity rather than just end with questions like they are giving a quiz. They ask not just about how to purchase insurance but also about the great field of health choices, probing into areas such as how many people die annually from medical mistakes.

“It’s more game-like,” said Bob Burgin, Amplifire's CEO, who said his company has focused its efforts on health care because the consequences of the field are so great.

Marshall, who will retire on June 16, said she believes the appeal of the educational platform could be wide, given that health costs are most companies’ second-largest expenses annually, behind only salaries. She’s asked Leapfrog Group to build a model of the program that could be used nationally, and she believes they could find even more customers through the National Alliance of Health Care Purchasing Coalitions.

The effort represents a big change for CBGH. But Marshall believes it’s one that can keep the

organization relevant as new health-care challenges arise for businesses and public employers.

“Our idea here is to build an entire curriculum so really at the end of it folks would be able to walk away with an advanced degree in purchasing benefits,” she said.

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