



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BREAKING NEWS: BOGOTA, Colombia, December 11, 2018. It was announced today that the quality of healthcare services offered by an integrated network in Colombia ranks in the top 10 following a rigorous comparison with the performance of the health systems of the 36 countries that are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Trust among insurers, service-providing institutions, professionals and the affiliates was the key to achieving these results with only 25% of their average expenditure across the OECD (US\$ 500 per person annually. This is equivalent to US\$ 860 when adjusted for purchasing power parity).

The network, which serves 1.3 million affiliates in Bogota and surrounding areas, was created in 2015 by an insurance company (known as Compensar EPS) and a group of 35 healthcare-providing organizations. At the time, the country was going through a difficult peace process with guerilla fighters, the population was migrating towards extreme political poles, the local currency was hitting record lows, and there were mounting doubts about the sustainability of the healthcare sector, with major insurers and providers declaring insolvency.

Together, the founding organizations developed a network model that drew from the best exemplars around the world, and established a governance structure devoted to aligning their interests and minimizing conflicts. Each affiliate has a personal physician and a primary care team, capable of solving most problems in the community, while leaving hospitals as the last resort. “Our main strength is to operate as a network of people who trust each other and share a higher purpose, rather than a network of institutions or services competing with each other”, says Dr. Mauricio Serra, the leader of the network.

The network ranked first in three key indicators: wait times for cataract surgery, incidence of pulmonary embolism and the health status reported by the affiliates. “It has been very exciting to see how 88.6% of the population served by this trusted network considered themselves to have good, very good or excellent levels of health”, added Dr. Alex Jadad, Professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of

Toronto in Canada, who led international teams that enriched the network with the best innovations from around the world, and oversaw its evaluation.

The implementation and daily operation of the network is supported by a state-of-the-art information technology platform designed to promote optimal communication and coordination across all settings and among all groups of stakeholders. “It is impressive to see how this group managed to create a sophisticated information system with such limited resources. I can see many opportunities for them to continue breaking new ground in the immediate future.”, said Dr. Yuri Quintana, Director of Global Health Informatics, Harvard Medical School in Cambridge, USA.

The degree of integration of the network was assessed by a team led by Dr. Pim Valentijn, Vice-President, Essenburgh Research and Consultancy in Hierden, The Netherlands. This process used a validated tool for patients and healthcare professionals involved in hemodialysis and was part of an international study involving 19 countries. The results revealed that the care providers of the Compensar network were more positive about their clinics’ integrated care abilities as compared to care providers in other countries in the reference sample. The patients’ assessments, however, were the second lowest after France, and similar to other South American countries like Uruguay and Chile.

“The network must be commended for the high degree of perceived integration by front-line professionals. The patients’ perspectives should be a source of encouragement for future efforts to promote greater engagement of the affiliates in the evolution of the network model“, stated Dr. Valentijn, who is also a Senior Researcher at Maastricht University in The Netherlands.

A book, entitled “Trusted networks: The key to achieve world-class health outcomes on a shoestring” was also launched today. It describes the rationale behind the creation of the network, the development of the model, the implementation and evaluation process and an agenda for the future of integrated networks.

Today’s announcement and the book launch act as an invitation to groups around the world to muster the unprecedented levels of leadership, clear vision, conviction, and willingness to engage in the painstaking work that is needed to see the emergence of systems that are truly devoted to enabling all humans to achieve optimal levels of health and well-being, with wise use of available resources, as part of a flourishing planet.