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for Employers

Welcome

Dear Business Partner:

The first quarter of 2007 has seen exciting changes in Massachusetts' health care landscape. The advent of health care reform presents both challenges and opportunities.

To that end, we have also made some invigorating changes to our programs and services. In this edition of BlueLinks, you'll learn more about the launch of the Access Blue Basic plan and our recent quality improvement initiatives in everything from care management programs to privacy update and health management.

We hope you find the following edition of BlueLinks helpful and informative. As always, we're here to help you and your clients—if you have any questions, please contact your Account Executive.

Sincerely,

Carlos Cubia
Vice President
Sales Division

In this issue of BlueLinks eNews:

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Health Care Reform eNews

We recently began publishing a special edition of BlueLinks eNews devoted solely to Health Care Reform. Look for it on the second and fourth Friday of the month. You'll find news and information that can help you and your clients navigate Massachusetts' new health care mandate. If you missed the March 9, 2007 edition, you can click to read about the [Connector delaying compliance for minimum creditable coverage until January of 2009](#).

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New Access Blue Basic Plan Launched

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts will be offering the new Access Blue Basic beginning July 1, 2007.

The Access Blue Basic plan is an open-access HMO plan with no referrals that offers employers an attractive price point, through a medical deductible on most services and innovative pharmacy programs.

Plan features include:

- Preventive care and pharmacy with no deductible
- No referral access to specialists

- \$1,500 individual/\$3,000 family deductible on services like emergency room, day surgery, non-preventive office visits, and inpatient care
- Pharmacy coverage with Blue Value Rx, which focuses on generics and lowest-net-cost brand name medications
- Exclusive Home Delivery program, which requires most maintenance medications to be obtained through the mail service pharmacy

If you have any questions about this new option, contact your Account Executive.

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Care Management Programs Update

We offer many care management programs designed to keep your clients' employees healthy. From behavioral health programs to fitness and weight loss benefits, we strive to evaluate care management services that offer the highest possible quality with evidence-based outcomes. We have updates to three of these programs.

Bariatric Surgery Privileging Program

We have mentioned in earlier communications that we are implementing a Bariatric Surgery Privileging Program beginning on June 1, 2007. For accounts that offer this benefit, this privileging program will only affect members in our HMO Blue, Blue Choice Plan 1 and 2, Network Blue plans, Blue Care Elect, and indemnity plans.

As of June 1, 2007, members who are candidates for bariatric (weight loss) surgery must choose a hospital that has been privileged through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts in order to be eligible for coverage.

The privileging program will require that medical facilities in Massachusetts meet the quality and safety standards established by a panel of experts convened by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety and Medical Errors. Facilities that do not meet the standards will not be eligible for reimbursement for bariatric surgery on our members. We will honor all preauthorizations approved before June 1, 2007.

Blue Care[®] Connection

In April 2007, we will begin offering a Blue Care[®] Connection program for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the fourth leading cause of chronic morbidity and mortality in the U.S. This program is designed to improve members' quality of life and support the physician-patient relationship and plan of care. Like our other disease management programs, it will provide educational tools that allow members to take a more active role in their own health. The COPD program, managed by Healthways, Inc. is designed to help members

- prevent or lessen the severity of COPD exacerbations to include the proper use of maintenance and/or exacerbation medications
- prevent upper airway infections
- foster adherence to a medication regimen and treatment plan
- enhance their functional status

The support and information members receive through these programs is not intended to replace the care of a physician, and members should continue to follow their physicians' treatment plans.

Healthways to Manage Blue Care[®] Connection for a Healthy Heart

In March 2007, we will transition management of our Blue Care[®] Connection for a Healthy Heart program to Healthways, Inc., an organization with over 20 years experience in providing health management support to physicians and their patients.

We already deliver many Blue Care[®] Connection programs in collaboration with Healthways.

This program provides valuable heart-health resources to help members lead healthier lives. Members will be contacted by registered nurses and dietitians at Healthways, who will offer confidential guidance and helpful tips on heart-health topics, ranging from cholesterol control to stress reduction. Members will also continue to receive educational materials in the mail about heart-health topics.

If you have any questions about our COPD care management program, please contact your Account Executive.

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HIPAA Update: National Provider Identifier (NPI)

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) mandated that the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) adopt a standard, unique, health identifier for health care providers. The National Provider Identifier (NPI) is the result of this mandate. Covered entities, including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and other providers who conduct business electronically, are required to implement this new standard by May 23, 2007.*

What We Are Doing

We began preparing for the NPI mandate in 2005. The NPI replaces current legacy provider numbers issued today by each payer for the purpose of claims adjudication. With this new standard, providers must request their own NPIs, and health plans must to adapt their systems to process claims using the new NPIs. We are working to complete all internal system changes in preparation for the May 23, 2007, deadline, and anticipate being in full compliance by that time. In addition, we are working closely with the provider community to educate them on the mandate requirements.

Please contact your Account Executive for further information.

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Coverage for Mastectomy-Related Services

As required by the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998, individuals who are covered for a mastectomy and elect breast reconstruction in connection with the mastectomy will receive benefits for the mastectomy-related services listed below. This is the case even if the individual was not covered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts at the time of the mastectomy. Benefits are provided for:

- All stages of reconstruction of the breast on which the mastectomy has been performed
- Surgery and reconstruction of the other breast to produce a symmetrical appearance
- Prostheses and treatment of physical complications at all stages of the mastectomy, including lymphedemas

Coverage is provided as determined in consultation with members and their attending physician.

If you have any questions, please contact your Account Executive.

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