

Free Online Health Record Launched for BlueCross Medicare Advantage Members

Service Helps Seniors Improve Their Health, Increase Satisfaction with Care Experience

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — You've just received a reminder to refill your prescription or a helpful tip about managing your high blood pressure. But it's not the doctor or a family member who's assisting you; instead, it's your online personal health manager.

It's an online resource designed to provide confidential, personalized attention to each Medicare Advantage beneficiary and allow them to better monitor and manage their care. The personal health manager and its features will be available free to all BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Medicare Advantage members effective January 2009.

Prescription refill reminders, care guides, health risk assessments, printable wallet-sized emergency room information, and drug interaction and symptom checkers are just some of the tools accessible via a secure member Web site.

Members decide which tools are helpful, what types of information and alerts they wish to receive and how involved they want to be. They can even allow the personal health manager to refer them to real people (case managers, disease managers and health consultants) who can help connect them with resources they need to improve their health.

"It's all about encouraging and empowering our members to actively take part in their health and health care," said Dr. Barbara Beeler, Medicare Advantage medical director for BlueCross. "With the personal health manager, seniors can take advantage of a range of activities that simplify tracking their health and health care experiences. And they can do it through the ease of their home computers."

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The Pew Internet & American Life Project states that 52 million Americans turn to the Web as a regular source of medical or health information. Among those growing ranks of online health seekers are seniors age 65 or older. In total, 35 percent in this age group use the Internet.

Internet-based health tools, like the BlueCross personal health manager, harness technology to continually analyze and leverage data. It also aids in applying best practice approaches in assisting members, as well as tailored help based on a member's health conditions and profile.

Data in the personal health manager is populated three ways: medical and pharmacy claims, member self-reporting, and input from health care professionals, who may access and supply data with the member's permission.

"With this system, BlueCross can better help our beneficiaries as they find themselves faced with increasing health care needs. We believe that this tool will allow our members to better navigate through their health care experiences and hopefully be more satisfied as a result," said Robert Slattery, vice president and general manager for Medicare Advantage at BlueCross.

BlueCross' personal health manager is available free to all its Medicare Advantage plan members. To use the tool, log in to the BlueAccess section on www.bcbst.com.

About BlueCross

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee offers its clients peace of mind through affordable solutions for health and healing, life and living. Founded in 1945, the Chattanooga-based company is focused on reinventing the health plan for both its 3 million Tennessee-based members as well as consumers across the country. Through its personal health advocacy approach, BlueCross is developing patient-centric products and services that positively impact affordability, patient safety and quality. BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Inc. is an independent licensee of the BlueCross BlueShield Association. For more information, visit the company's Web site at www.bcbst.com.

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