

News Release

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BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF DELAWARE'S PILOT PROGRAM GIVES PHYSICIANS E-PRESCRIBING TOOL

Wilmington, DE — Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware (BCBSD) is partnering with DrFirst to provide an electronic prescription management system to 150 physicians in the BCBSD network. The pilot program will address the issue of patient safety and respond to a recent report from the Institute of Medicine, *Preventing Medication Errors*, that recommends all health providers and pharmacies install electronic prescribing (e-prescribing) systems by 2010.

A recent report from the Institute of Medicine estimated that 7,000 patient deaths and 1.5 million injuries occur every year due to medication errors. Many of these mistakes are due to poor communication among health professionals and patients, and faulty systems for distributing and dispensing medication.

E-prescribing systems can overcome difficulties with illegible handwriting and identify drug allergies, adverse reactions and potentially excessive dosages of medications. BCBSD's pilot program provides physicians with personal digital assistants (PDAs) and DrFirst's Rcopia software to allow them to access up to 10 years of their patients' medication histories, including active medications, allergy information and diagnosis information. The system also recommends generic replacements for brand name drugs, when appropriate.

Using the PDAs, physicians can confidentially transmit a new prescription or prescription renewal electronically to a patient's retail or mail order pharmacy, minimizing the time that physicians and pharmacies spend on phone calls and faxes regarding prescriptions. The system also prevents errors due to illegible handwriting and the mis-typing of prescription information into the pharmacy database. It further benefits the patient by eliminating a trip to the pharmacy to drop off the prescription to be filled.

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E-Prescribe Pilot Program

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The physicians participating in the pilot program will be able to use the system for all patients, not just those with BCBSD coverage.

“By enrolling the physicians who write the highest volume of prescriptions for our members, we expect to improve prescription drug safety, convenience and costs for our members throughout the state,” said Dr. Paul A. Kaplan, BCBSD’s Chief Medical Officer. “This technology has the potential to improve one of the most basic parts of the medical process and one of the last aspects of the health care system to use information technology.”

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware is headquartered in Wilmington, Delaware. In its 70th year of service, BCBSD offers a comprehensive portfolio of health benefits products to more than 383,000 customers. BCBSD is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. More information about BCBSD is available on BCBSD’s website, **bcbsde.com**.

DrFirst is a national provider of physician connectivity services through its award-winning Rcopia electronic prescription management system. Founded in 2000, DrFirst creates innovative services targeted to physicians in both ambulatory and acute care environments. With a strong emphasis on products that link physicians, patients, pharmacies and payers, DrFirst works to lower health care costs while improving clinical outcomes. More information about DrFirst can be found at **drfirst.com**.

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