

news release

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**Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Takes Top Honors in
Program to Increase Quality via Health Information Exchange**

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association recognizes Anthem for the Quality Health First® Program operated by Indiana Health Information Exchange

(INDIANAPOLIS—October 18, 2010) – The Quality Health First® Program, a quality improvement program with a pay-for-performance component, is one of seven programs recognized this year with a Best of Blue Clinical Distinction Award for its innovative and successful approach to improving access to high quality, safe and affordable health care for consumers. The Program is managed by the Indiana Health Information Exchange (IHIE).

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Indiana was involved with the program’s inception and was the only participating commercial payer for the last four years, until recently. Anthem was instrumental, not only as the primary funder of the program, but in its design and payer participation guidelines.

The Best of Blue Clinical Distinction Program was developed by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and the Harvard Medical School Department of Health Care Policy. The purpose of the Clinical Distinction Awards is to highlight the Blue Cross Blue Shield plans nationally that demonstrate innovation, efficiency and potential for replication.

“Harvard is pleased to recognize Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield in Indiana for developing a program that sets such high standards for its effectiveness in improving patient care,” said Barbara J. McNeil, Ph.D., head of the Department of Health Care Policy, Harvard Medical School. “The Blues’ focus on quality, safety and access plays a critical role in improving the healthcare delivery system and enhancing quality and value for consumers.”

IHIE’s Quality Health First Program took this honor, along with two other programs in three Anthem-affiliated health plans in Maine, California and Georgia.

“The Clinical Distinction Award is another positive reminder that Anthem is improving the health of our members,” said Dr. David Lee, vice president of provider contracting and education for Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Indiana.

Initial results on three quarters of data indicate that 70 percent of the clinical measures have improved each quarter compared to the previous quarter.

“We believe that in improving these clinical measures—such as getting more patients screened for breast cancer and testing their blood sugar—that we can improve their health and their quality of life,” said Lee. “In addition, helping patients discover or better control a disease—such as diabetes—can also help reduce the overall cost of care.”

Physicians receive monthly reports of information gathered from insurance claims and over 3 billion pieces of clinical data from IHIE, the nation’s largest health information exchange organization, to proactively monitor those patients who are due or overdue for certain tests and screenings. For example, they can view which patients are getting tests completed, those results, and which patients have yet to come in for testing. Over 1,300 providers in nearly 50 communities in Indiana participate in the program.

“It’s collaborations like these—with physicians, providers, nonprofits, academia, and other payers—that will help us transform our health system and improve patient outcomes,” said Dr. J. Marc Overhage, president and CEO of the Indiana Health Information Exchange. “We’re enthusiastic about the results so far, and our future prospects to further move the needle on Hoosiers’ health care quality as more providers join the program.”

The Quality Health First Program serves as Anthem’s quality reporting tool for primary care physicians in the Indiana health service area. Anthem-contracted primary care physicians in Indiana may earn up to a 10 percent increase in reimbursement from Anthem for some of the most commonly billed medical services based on quality metrics.

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About Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield in Indiana:

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About the Indiana Health Information Exchange

Indiana Health Information Exchange, Inc. (IHIE) is a non-profit corporation formed in 2004 by the Regenstrief Institute, private hospitals, local and state health departments, BioCrossroads and other prominent organizations in Indiana. As the nation’s largest health information exchange organization, IHIE helps ensure health information is where it needs to be, when it needs to be there to improve care coordination and patient outcomes. By connecting hospitals, physician offices and other healthcare facilities, IHIE helps to improve care coordination and support the safest and highest quality patient care possible, while saving time and money. IHIE assembles information to help providers identify patients needing testing and follow-up care for chronic diseases. An IHIE-led collaboration (\$16 million Central Indiana Beacon Community) is one of 17 national cooperative agreements from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to advance healthcare quality and efficiency. www.ihie.org.