



*Blue News* is a quarterly publication for hospital administrators from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana

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## **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Wins Brand Excellence Award**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana has received a 2007 Brand Excellence Award for Member Retention from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The award is given to Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans that retain a high percentage of their members from the previous year.

"We are proud to receive this honor from our national association," said President and CEO Gery Barry. "Our high membership retention rates reflect our high standards for customer service, quality and value."

The annual award honors Blue Cross companies that excel in developing and enhancing the overall image of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield brands, some of the most recognized and trusted in the world. The Brand Excellence Award program began in 1995.

"The winning Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies are taking the leadership role of enhancing products and services that continue to capture, retain and provide choices for their members," said Scott P. Serota, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association president and CEO.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is Louisiana-owned and -operated. Marking its 74th anniversary this year, the company is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. It is a tax-paying mutual company, owned by its policyholders.

Headquartered in Baton Rouge, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana also has district offices in Alexandria, Houma, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, New Orleans and Shreveport. The company's subsidiaries include HMO Louisiana, Inc. and Southern National Life Insurance Company, Inc. For more information, visit the company's website at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com).

## **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Executive Richard Williams Announces Retirement**

Blue Cross senior vice president of provider and customer relations, Richard Williams, has announced his plan to retire effective July 16, 2008. Mr. Williams' career at Blue Cross has spanned over 34 years. During that time, Mr. Williams has had an inestimable impact on our organization and on healthcare throughout Louisiana.

Over the past three decades, Mr. Williams has managed many of the functional components of our organization including customer service, claims, membership and billing, network administration, provider reimbursement, provider audit, medical management, administrative services, and community relations. He also has served as executive director of HMO Louisiana, Inc. (our wholly owned subsidiary) and president of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation.

Mr. Williams' most recent efforts focused on restructuring and revitalizing our customer service operation for Blue Cross and HMOLA in order to create the foundation for highly satisfying our customers and providers. Additionally, Mr. Williams has worked with the Blue Cross Board of Directors over the past two years to revamp the strategic direction, processes, and procedures for corporate philanthropy, community relations, and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation.

Throughout his tenure, Mr. Williams' one constant responsibility has been for provider networks. He personally has led the development and management of all provider networks for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana. Throughout Mr. Williams' career, he has been dedicated to serving both our providers and our customers; and he has always done so with a great spirit of collaboration with his colleagues at Blue Cross and in the provider community.

### **NPI Deadline is Here**

Providers must notify Blue Cross of their NPI(s), if you have not already done so.

- We cannot receive notice of your NPI through a claim.
- If you have notified us of your NPI, you must file claims with your NPI or with both your NPI and taxonomy code.
- If you **do not** notify us of your NPI, any claims filed regardless of having an NPI or both an NPI and taxonomy code, can be rejected.

For more information on how to obtain an NPI and how to notify us, please visit [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com).

## The Medical Cost Reference Guide

The United States continues to spend more on healthcare than other nations, but there are some positive indicators on the horizon.

As healthcare leaders in the United States, Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies continue to aggressively manage healthcare costs by providing access to high value healthcare that is quality-driven, affordable and accessible. For the fourth year in a row, growth in health insurance premiums declined across the nation in 2007 and the rate of growth is currently at its lowest level in seven years.

To learn more, please refer to the Medical Cost Reference Guide at <http://www.bcbs.com/blueresources/mcrg/MCRG.pdf>. The Guide provides comprehensive information on healthcare economics, utilization and management trends from credible, peer-reviewed sources.

Source: Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, <http://www.bcbs.com/blueresources/mcrg/>, accessed 4/28/08.

## CPT and HCPCS Codes Updated for 2nd Quarter 2008

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana recently completed a review of new 2008 CPT® and HCPCS codes. As a result, minor updates were made to the outpatient Surgical and Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services code ranges. These updates were effective April 1, 2008. A notification letter including a list of the updated codes was sent to your facility via e-mail or U.S. mail on April 15. If you did not receive a copy of the letter, please e-mail us at [provider.communications@bcbsla.com](mailto:provider.communications@bcbsla.com) or contact your area Network Development Contracting Representative.

## New Blue Distinction® Centers for Bariatric Surgery

We are pleased to announce that the two facilities listed below have completed the evaluation process and have met the criteria necessary to be designated as a 2008/2009 Blue Distinction Center for Bariatric Surgery:

- Southwest Medical Center of Lafayette (renewed distinction)
- Women & Children's Hospital of Lake Charles (newly awarded)

Under Blue Distinction, there are 800 specialty centers in 42 states that have been recognized for providing quality care. These specialty areas include: cardiac care, bariatric surgery, transplants and complex and rare cancers. This program is raising the quality of care being delivered across the country by recognizing medical facilities that meet objective, evidence-based thresholds for clinical quality developed in collaboration with expert clinicians and leading professional organizations. For more on Blue Distinction, visit the following link: <http://www.bcbs.com/innovations/bluedistinction/centers/>.

## Credentialing and Admitting Privileges Policy Reminder

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana credentialing policy allows primary care physicians (PCPs) to designate a peer physician or a hospitalist group to admit their patients to a network hospital for them in lieu of having admitting privileges of their own. We require a letter briefly documenting the arrangement including signatures from both the network provider and a representative from the hospitalist group. This arrangement is applicable for PCPs only and does not apply to specialists. We require direct admitting privileges of most of our specialist network physicians. If you have questions regarding our credentialing policy, please contact us at (800) 716-2299, option 2.

## Let's Make Medical Harm History! Join the 5 Million Lives Campaign

America's Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans have joined the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) in expanding the national 5 Million Lives campaign that is designed to dramatically reduce incidents of medical harm in U.S. hospitals. The goal of the 5 Million Lives campaign is to protect patients from five million incidents of medical harm by December 2008. The Campaign challenges hospitals to enroll and adopt suggested changes in care that save lives and reduce patient injury.

Hospital participation nationwide is vital to the Campaign's success. Many Louisiana hospitals are already part of this important campaign. There is no cost for a hospital to enroll—just a commitment for change. For more information and resources, visit [www.ihl.org/ihl/programs/campaign](http://www.ihl.org/ihl/programs/campaign).



## Imaging Authorizations

Hospitals and free-standing diagnostic facilities that perform the technical component of imaging services cannot obtain authorizations for ordering physicians. Ordering physicians, whether a primary care physician (PCP) or specialist, are required to provide basic clinical information and patient demographics.

Ordering physicians should contact AIM (American Imaging Management) to obtain authorization by using the **ProviderPortal<sub>SM</sub>** on iLinkBLUE. Or, call AIM at (866) 455-8416 or the Blue Cross Authorization Line at (800) 523-6435.

Authorization is required for the following outpatient, non-emergent imaging services for Blue Cross and HMO Louisiana, Inc., our wholly owned subsidiary:

- Computerized Tomography (CT) Scans
- Computerized Tomography Angiography (CTA)
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
- Magnetic Resonance Angiography (MRA)
- Positron-Emission Tomography (PET)
- Nuclear Cardiology Procedures

## Blue Membership

as of April 2008

Alexandria	39,259
Baton Rouge Area	180,483
Lafayette Area	129,130
Lake Charles Area	63,390
Monroe Area	42,325
New Orleans Area	238,592
Shreveport Area	87,359
Out-of-State	6,913
ITS (includes BlueCard® members)	327,424
Dental only	1,344
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,136,199</b>

## Personal health records available online

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana recently launched a portable web-based personal health record (PHR) tool for our members. Blue Cross-provided personal health records are unique because customers can continue to access their PHR even if they change insurers. Through AccessBlue, Blue Cross' secure online self-service member tool, our members can create and access their own personal health record, fill out critical personal health information and allow others, e.g. providers, to access their information.

Blue Cross believes in consumer-ownership of health records; thus, portability is critical to our strategy. PHR also supports consumer-directed healthcare. The Blue Cross PHR allows members to enter and track their lifelong health information. The following are just some of the many features of a PHR:

- Track symptoms, medications, diagnoses, test results, allergies, etc.
- Identify harmful drug interactions among medications, herbal supplements and vitamins
- Screening and test reminder
- Be prepared - vital information will be readily available in the event of a crisis
- Get the most from physician appointments by preparing for them in advance
- Save money & time by reducing duplicated tests and avoiding medication errors
- Available 24/7; secure, password-protected
- Members own their individual information, while state of the art security and privacy controls ensure this information remains confidential
- A member's personal health record is theirs to keep, even if they change health insurers

For more information, see the Customer page of [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com).

## Poll: Electronic Health Records' Benefits Outweigh Risks

Nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults believe that the benefits of electronic health records (EHRs) outweigh the privacy risks, according to a new Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive poll.

Three-quarters of the survey respondents said they agree that patients would receive better care if doctors and researchers were able to share information more easily through electronic systems. But, the poll also indicates that privacy concerns still remain among healthcare consumers. Half of those surveyed said EHRs make patient privacy more difficult to guarantee.

For the full article, click the following link: <http://www.ihealthbeat.org/articles/2007/11/29/Poll-Most-Adults-Say-EHR-Benefits-Outweigh-Privacy-Risks.aspx?topicID=54>.

Source: Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration, <http://www.ehrtoday.org/home/>, accessed 4/28/08.