

Innovative technology will enable physicians to have secure access to online patient medical records and claims information from their mobile telephones

MANCHESTER, N.H., May 7 /PRNewswire/ -- New Hampshire physicians will now have "real time" access to medical records and medical histories for their Anthem patients, virtually anywhere they can receive an internet signal, thanks to an innovative program from Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in New Hampshire.

"Now all licensed New Hampshire practitioners who are part of our ePrescribing program are also able to access both medical records and claims data on Anthem members, anytime, anywhere by using their web-enabled cell phone," said Richard Lafleur, M.D., medical director, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in New Hampshire, who added that participants could also access the new program from their office or home computer.

Last October, in an effort to improve patient safety, control costs, and reduce medication errors, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in New Hampshire and the NH Citizens Health Initiative, created by Gov. John Lynch, launched a state-wide electronic prescribing, or ePrescribing, program for every physician office in the Granite State to use for all of their patients, regardless of health plan. ePrescribing alerts physicians to potential dangerous drug interactions and enables licensed practitioners to generate a prescription electronically and then transmit it to a pharmacy.

The addition of the new technology -- known as Member Medical History (MMH) -- further enhances the ePrescribing tool by delivering an unprecedented amount of clinical information to the physician wherever he or she may be. Now the doctor looking to generate an electronic prescription is able to quickly access their Anthem patient's medical history, getting valuable information on medical conditions and the patient's most recent care, test results, or diagnoses by other clinicians.

"Having access to up-to-the-minute information on what is going on with a patient and their health can be vital in helping determine the best care decisions possible," said Azar Korbey, M.D., a family practitioner from Salem, NH. "This latest enhancement to an already solid program greatly supports that process."

While physicians can access ePrescribing as well as the new enhancement from a variety of cellular carriers, participants who enter into a two-year service agreement with Sprint receive a free hand-held device (the HTC 6800 Windows Mobile Device).

"Putting even more comprehensive information in the physician's hands

at the time care decisions are being made improves quality and efficiency," said Charles Kennedy, M.D., vice president of health information technology for Anthem. "ePrescribing and MMH are good examples of how Anthem can use technology to create a community benefit for all patients while still delivering unique value for our members."

More than three billion prescriptions are written annually in the United States, with medication errors resulting in \$77 billion in costs and 7,000 deaths per year (Institute of Medicine, 2006). Currently, fewer than 22 percent of physicians nationwide use the basic capabilities of electronic prescribing, according to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS estimates that the use of such technology could eliminate as many as two million harmful drug events each year. Electronic prescribing pilots have demonstrated that up to 2 percent of all prescriptions transmitted this way get changed before being administered to the patient because ePrescribing has alerted the physician to potential safety problems.

The ePrescribing program is supported by the National ePrescribing Patient Safety Initiative(TM) (NEPSI(TM)), a coalition of the nation's leading health care and technology companies that have joined together to provide free ePrescribing technology for every physician in America.

"Anthem's ePrescribing initiative last fall was a major step toward enhancing the safety of the medication prescribing process for New Hampshire residents," said Glen Tullman, co-chair of NEPSI and chief executive officer of Allscripts, which provides NEPSI's web-based ePrescribing software. "This enhancement is a significant step in further improving quality of health care services delivered locally."

New Hampshire physicians who are part of the Anthem network are encouraged to call their network management representative for additional details on the ePrescribing program.

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