

# Physician UPDATE



## In this issue...

Chiropractor supports quality efforts ..... 3  
 Coalition achieves charity status ..... 3  
 CME on spine ailments ..... 4  
 Electronic funds transfer ..... 1  
 Foundation addressing nursing shortage.... 2  
 Technology enhances patient care ..... 2  
 Value Partnerships' successes ..... 1

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is a nonprofit corporation and independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

## Seminar explores Value Partnerships' successes

In 2006, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan unveiled its Value Partnerships program to improve health care value for employers, groups and BCBSM members. The program represents an unprecedented level of cooperation among the Blues, physicians and hospitals in Michigan, and it has achieved success on several fronts since its inception.

During a BCBSM-sponsored seminar that focused on the Value Partnerships program last fall, Mauro Moscucci, M.D., director of interventional cardiology at the University of Michigan Health Systems, described the BCBSM Cardiovascular Consortium's success in improving coronary care outcomes for patients at five Michigan hospitals.

The consortium was established to analyze practice variation and improve outcomes of coronary interventions through collaboration. Through the consortium's efforts, patients are receiving improved cardiac care, and costs were reduced by more than \$5 million since 2004.

Two other Value Partnerships programs have also achieved immediate results: the Physician Group Incentive Program and the Physician Organization Gain Sharing program. Richard E. Ward, M.D., vice president of BCBSM Clinical Programs and

Network Management, outlined some of the ways these programs have immediately benefited providers and members. As an example, he said that the group incentive program has saved \$7 million in cost-effective prescribing. Thirty-one groups and more than 4,800 physicians participate in these programs.

"Five years ago, we couldn't talk about the subjects of collaborating to improve health care, achieving desired outcomes and reducing costs," said Thomas Simmer, M.D., BCBSM senior vice president and chief medical officer. He emphasized that we have to improve our systems and processes to be successful in delivering better health care.

The Blues recognize the importance of all the stakeholders in health care and want to make the stakeholder experience better for all who are involved in providing health care to Michigan residents, said Daniel J. Loepp, BCBSM president and chief executive officer. "Today's changing health care marketplace presents challenges for all parties involved, and it is incumbent upon all of us to do things differently now," he said.

We will chronicle the successes resulting from the Value Partnerships program in future *Physician Update* articles. \*

## Electronic funds transfer, online vouchers coming soon

BCBSM is preparing to offer electronic payments and online vouchers in early 2007 to Michigan physicians and other professional health care providers, including billers of routine vision and hearing services. Once implemented, providers can enroll online to participate in the free program.

The advantages of electronic payments and vouchers include:

- ▲ Elimination of problems associated with multiple BCBSM mailings with checks and paper payment vouchers

- ▲ No more worries about lost checks
- ▲ Vouchers that are searchable and printable
- ▲ Access to up to 36 months of voucher history
- ▲ Notice of rejected services also available

Please watch future issues of *The Record*, web-DENIS broadcast messages and [bcbsm.com](http://bcbsm.com) for details.

For more information, please contact your BCBSM provider consultant or see Page 12 of the December 2006 *Record*. \*

A message from Dr. Kipa

## Technology use enhances patient care

Physicians, pharmacists and hospital staff members are learning about the role technology can play in improving patient care and safety. Electronic patient medical records, electronic prescribing and other supplemental physician office software can help reduce medical errors and enhance preventive care with electronic reminders tied to individual patient medical records. This functionality is a key component of implementing "The Chronic Care Model," mentioned in the October 2006 *Physician Update* and discussed at a continuing medical education seminar in November.



S. George Kipa, M.D.

Jerome Frankel, D.O., a Detroit family practice physician and medical director of Oakland Southfield Physicians P.C., a primary care group with more than 250 physicians, is very excited about a pilot program his group is undertaking with the help of the POGS program. Four of their primary care offices in Wayne and Oakland counties intend to use the Cielo Clinic software from Cielo MedSolutions LLC to alert physicians and office staff of needed lab tests for patients with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, and of needed preventive screenings, such as Pap smears, immunizations and mammograms.

Oakland Southfield Physicians' central computer server will transmit encounter forms to each office outlining needed tests

or procedures for those patients scheduled for an appointment the next day. Office staff will place these forms on the patients' charts for the physician to see during each patient visit. Oakland Southfield Physicians has recently expanded its technology support staff, including a full-time computer programmer to facilitate this pilot program and other emerging technology initiatives.

Cielo Clinic was brought to Oakland Southfield Physicians' attention by the Greater Detroit Area Health Council's Save Lives, Save Dollars initiative. According to Dr. Frankel, Oakland Southfield Physicians completed a thorough analysis before deciding to partner with Cielo MedSolutions. More than 10 years of research and development in the family practice setting have been put into the Cielo Clinic system, which is based on software originally developed at The University of Michigan.

This is an example of how physician groups can use the BCBSM's Physician Organization Gain-Sharing resources to help support the infrastructure costs of such initiatives.

### We'd like to hear from you

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Thomas Simmer, M.D., BCBSM senior vice president and chief medical officer, by fax at 313-983-2020, or e-mail at [doctorsimmer@bcbsm.com](mailto:doctorsimmer@bcbsm.com).

Remember you can read *Physician Update* online by visiting [bcbsm.com/providers/physup/2007/january/index.html](http://bcbsm.com/providers/physup/2007/january/index.html). \*

## BCBSM Foundation chosen to participate in national program addressing predicted nursing shortage

As soon as two years from now, the shortage of nursing staff in Michigan's health care industry will reach critical proportions due to the aging of the nursing workforce and the overall population.

To address this challenge, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has awarded a \$246,602 grant to the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation as one of 10 foundations nationwide to participate in *Partners Investing in Nursing's Future*, a national initiative to develop strategies for retaining a viable nursing work force.

The Foundation will, in turn, contribute an additional \$125,000 and use the grant to partner with the College of Nursing at Michigan State University to pilot *Nursing for Life: The RN Career Transition Program*. This statewide, two-year program is seen as a possible national model to help alleviate a projected shortfall in qualified nurses.

*Nursing for Life* will be a Web-based educational program with on-site clinical experience. It will present strategies for retaining nurses in the workforce by transitioning them from acute hospital care into home-based, hospice, long-term and ambulatory care practice.

"*Nursing for Life* provides nurses with a clear alternative to leaving their profession outright," said Ira Strumwasser, BCBSM Foundation executive director and CEO. "We are confident this project will create meaningful ways to enable qualified nurses to continue working and adding their skills, heading off a severe shortage that is projected in as little as two years."

For additional information, visit the BCBSM Foundation Web site at [bcbsm.com/foundation](http://bcbsm.com/foundation). \*

# MI Health and Safety Coalition achieves charity status

The Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Michigan Health and Safety Coalition as a public charity and granted it 501(c)(3) status. The designation will expand the coalition's ability to provide leadership, share information, collaborate with health care stakeholders and advocate for reducing patient harm in Michigan.

"This establishes us as a formal entity and makes us eligible to apply for grant funding to support our patient safety initiatives," said Thomas Simmer, M.D., chairman and president of the coalition, and BCBSM senior vice president and chief medical officer. The coalition, which incorporated in April 2006, established a 15-member board of directors and adopted bylaws in 2006. BCBSM is a member of the coalition.

The coalition formed in 2000 to improve the quality of health care in Michigan through cost-effective improvements in patient safety. Its board represents hospitals, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, employers, consumer and labor groups, health plans, MPRO — Michigan's Medicare quality improvement organization — and the Michigan Department of Community Health. Ongoing coalition projects include an annual survey of Michigan hospitals conducted jointly with

The Leapfrog Group and an annual patient safety conference.

In fall 2004, the coalition accepted Gov. Jennifer Granholm's invitation to act as the Michigan State Commission on Patient Safety. That resulted in patient safety recommendations summarized in a report, *Call to Action: A Plan to Improve Patient Safety in Michigan's Health Care System*. Download the report at [mihealthandsafety.org/statecommission/index.html](http://mihealthandsafety.org/statecommission/index.html)\*

"Once you have 501(c)(3) status, you have more opportunities to work on the safety issues that matter to patients," said Beverley McDonald, who represents the Michigan Consumer Health Care Coalition and is the Michigan Health and Safety Coalition's secretary and treasurer. "Safety is a big issue for consumers. If they're not safe, it doesn't matter if they have the latest procedure or technology."

More information can be found about The Michigan Health and Safety Coalition on its Web site: [mihealthandsafety.org](http://mihealthandsafety.org)\*. \*

*\*BCBSM does not control this Web site or endorse its general content.*

The 2007 Patient Safety Conference is scheduled for March 28 and 29 at the Somerset Inn in Troy, Mich.

# Marshall chiropractor supports BCBSM quality initiatives

*Goal of team effort is better patient outcomes*

Philip L. Knight, D.C., president of Marshall Chiropractic Life Center, P.C., in Marshall, Mich., spends his days seeing patients who present with neck and low back injuries, headaches, arm and leg pain, as well as various visceral dysfunctions incurred as a result of spinal subluxation.

But once a month, Dr. Knight participates in BCBSM's Clinical Quality Improvement Committee — a gathering of providers and BCBSM representatives working to improve the quality of health care in Michigan.

The committee's goal is to maintain a systematic, comprehensive approach to measure, assess and improve the quality and delivery of health care using evidence-based standards. The group reviews quality related to issues such as diabetes care, ischemic heart disease care and promoting appropriate antibiotic use. The group also monitors existing quality improvement programs and works on developing new evidence-based guidelines.

According to Thomas Simmer, M.D., BCBSM senior vice president and chief medical officer, BCBSM values the



Philip L. Knight, D.C.

contribution providers like Dr. Knight make on our committees. "He helps the group to think about issues from a provider's perspective, specifically chiropractors, in his case," Simmer says.

And as Dr. Knight sees it, there's great value in all quality improvement initiatives within BCBSM "coming together" to a single committee with a unified purpose. He also values the goal — safer, more effective health care delivery for BCBSM members.

When asked what results he'd like to see from BCBSM's partnerships with chiropractors and all health care providers, Dr. Knight says he sees education as the key. "Working with BCBSM to educate and inform patients and purchasers of health care about the value of chiropractic has long been a goal of the chiropractic profession," he says. "Developing educational materials and conducting joint research activities will go a long way toward improving patient access."

For physicians, Dr. Knight believes quality review, utilization standards and documentation requirements are not only here to stay, but likely will increase. For him, however, perspective is the key. When practitioners can see the goal of quality requirements is better patient outcomes, it may take the edge off the hard work involved. Doctors, professional organizations and health plans working together can achieve the best results by sharing the task of improving health care quality. \*



# Physician UPDATE

Published by:  
 Provider Communications — Mail Code 0205  
 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan  
 600 E. Lafayette Blvd.  
 Detroit, MI 48226-2998  
 bcbsm.com

Address Service Requested

PRESORTED STANDARD  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 BLUE CROSS  
 BLUE SHIELD  
 OF MICHIGAN

## Physician Update

Rob Sawalski, manager ..... 313-225-5839  
 rsawalski@bcbsm.com

Dan Artman, editor ..... dartman@bcbsm.com

Contributing writers ..... Carol Grady, Jim Matuszak,  
 Bonnie Meier

Graphic designer ..... Jennifer Chapin

To update your information on our mailing list, please send us your name and new address along with the old address to our database administrator:

Fax ..... 313-225-7709  
 or 800-553-1369 (toll-free)

Mail:  
 Database Administrator  
 Provider Communications — Mail Code 0205  
 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan  
 600 E. Lafayette Blvd.  
 Detroit, MI 48226-2998

**Frequently called numbers:**  
**Provider Consulting Services, director's office..... 313-225-7899**  
**Physician Ombudsman department ..... 800-816-2583**

No portion of this publication may be copied without the express written permission of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, except that BCBSM participating health care providers may make copies for their personal use. In no event may any portion of this publication be copied or reprinted and used for commercial purposes by any party other than BCBSM.

## Feb. 13 CME program on spine ailments

BCBSM and United Oakwood Providers will present a free continuing medical education program for physicians, entitled *Modern Treatment of Spine Ailments*, Tuesday, Feb. 13, from 6 to 9:10 p.m. at Byblos Banquet Center in Dearborn.

Registration and dinner are at 5:30 p.m. Advance registration is required. Register either via e-mail to cesaronema@uopllc.org or by calling 313-240-9867, ext. 4.

CME credit is available for physicians who attend the entire session. For more information about this and other upcoming BCBSM CME programs, please visit our Web site at [bcbsm.com](http://bcbsm.com). Click on *I am a Provider*, then select *Provider Training & Seminars*. \*

**BCBSM offices will be closed Monday,  
 Jan. 15, in observance of  
 Martin Luther King Jr. Day**