

Contact: Jerome Espy, 313-549-9884, newsroom@bcbsm.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and 17 Hospitals Launch Statewide Initiative
To Prevent Blood Clots In Hospitalized Patients**

Program builds upon successful partnership that has improved care for patients in other areas

DETROIT, August 26, 2010 – Building upon an award-winning partnership program that has helped improve the quality of care in other medical areas, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Blue Care Network, the University of Michigan Medical Center and 16 other hospitals throughout the state are launching a new quality improvement initiative aimed at reducing the risk of blood clots in hospitalized patients.

Blood clots (venous thromboembolism or VTE) are a common risk of hospitalization due to the lack of movement a person experiences while remaining in a hospital bed. Patients who develop hospital-associated blood clots often experience poorer clinical outcomes, extended hospital stays, and ongoing treatment to address potential long-term ramifications of the blood clot.

To combat this, the Michigan Blues and the participating hospitals will collect and share data to help develop best practices for preventing blood clots in high-risk medical inpatients.

“Much attention has already been focused on blood clot prevention in surgical patients, but this is the first statewide effort to focus on blood clot prevention in patients who are hospitalized for medical – not surgical – reasons,” says David Share, MD, MPH, executive medical director, health care quality, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. “This collaborative will address problems that affect a wide variety of patients. It will engage physicians based in hospitals, pharmacists, nurses, specialists such as cardiologists and hematologists, surgeons, and hospital-based safety personnel.”

Participating hospitals include:

- Allegiance Health, Jackson
- Bay Regional Medical Center, Bay City
- Beaumont Hospital, Grosse Pointe
- Beaumont Hospital, Troy
- Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak
- Borgess Medical Center, Kalamazoo
- Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit
- Ingham Regional Medical Center, Lansing
- Lapeer Regional Medical Center, Lapeer
- McLaren Regional Medical Center, Flint
- Mt. Clemens Regional Medical Center, Mt. Clemens
- Oakwood Hospital and Medical Center, Dearborn
- POH Regional Medical Center, Pontiac

- Sparrow Hospital, Lansing
- Spectrum Health Butterworth Hospital, Grand Rapids
- St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Ann Arbor
- University of Michigan Medical Center, Ann Arbor

“Preventing VTE, which includes both deep venous thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE), is important. Nearly one million Americans suffer from VTE each year, with over half of all patients developing their VTE in the hospital or in the thirty days after hospitalization. Without prevention, ten to twenty percent of hospitalized medical patients may suffer DVT, with highest rates in patients with heart attacks, heart failure, and stroke,” says Scott Flanders, M.D., director of the University of Michigan Hospitalist Program and head of the BCBSM-commissioned coordinating center for this initiative. “By organizing hospitals statewide to collect, analyze and share data, we can develop better systems and strategies for preventing blood clots in Michigan and potentially across the nation, particularly in high-risk patients.”

Blood clots affect an estimated 900,000 people in the U.S. each year, resulting in several hundred thousand hospitalizations and about 300,000 deaths. A recent report by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) estimated the additional cost for treating acute DVT might be as high as \$10,000 per case, while the cost for PE is nearly \$20,000 per case. Given the risk of complications or death, AHRQ has ranked blood clot prevention as the first priority out of 79 preventive initiatives that can improve patient safety in health care settings.

The initiative officially launches October 21, although participants are preparing now by developing their clinical teams in preparation for the October kick-off. This initiative could result in potential savings of \$5 million in five years.

This initiative is part of Value Partnerships, a collection of collaborative initiatives among physicians, hospitals and the Michigan Blues, all aimed at improving quality in medical care. To learn more about this comprehensive effort, go to www.valuepartnerships.com.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is a nonprofit corporation and independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more company information, visit bcbsm.com.