Health Impact Of Diabetes In New England Is 20% Lower Than National Average

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts' Alternative Quality Contract (AQC) is an effective way to improve chronic conditions while controlling costs

BOSTON, Aug. 1, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A new study by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) finds that New England is one of three regions in the nation where diabetes has the lowest health impact. "Health Impact" is defined as the prevalence and severity of a condition, as well as the risk of premature death and years of life lost due to disability. Diabetes' impact on health is even greater when considering common comorbid conditions such as hypertension, high cholesterol, and obesity, which can lead to heart attacks, strokes, and other serious conditions.



The report, "Diabetes and the Commercially Insured U.S. Population," is the result of analysis of the BCBS Health Index, which leverages claims data from more than 40 million Blue Cross Blue Shield members across the country. The study shows that diabetes has the third-largest health impact – higher than heart disease, cancer, and asthma - on Blue Cross Blue Shield commercially insured members at 9.3 percent.

The study also found that:

- Diabetes is increasing most rapidly nationally among members age 18 through 34, up 4.7 percent from 2013 through 2015. This increase corresponds with the spike in obesity rates among this age group. Here again, New England beats the national average, with the country's lowest obesity rates among 18 to 34 year olds.
- Nationally, the prevalence of diabetes is 7 percent, while in New England it is below 6 percent.
- The per-member, per-year cost of diabetes is lowest in New England at $120, compared to $137 nationally.

Through its Alternative Quality Contract (AQC), Blue Cross Blue Shield ofMassachusetts, in partnership with its provider network, is helping to improve the health of its members with chronic conditions like diabetes. The AQC is a global budget model, designed to encourage cost-effective, patient-centered care by rewarding participating physicians and hospitals for the quality, outcomes, and affordability of the care they deliver. Through the AQC, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts provides customized reporting to every provider organization, offering detailed, actionable information to enable improvements in the care of individual patients and their overall patient population. Providers use these reports to more fully identify and address their patients' needs, including those of patients with chronic conditions like diabetes. Introduced in 2009, the AQC is one of the largest commercial payment reform initiatives in the United States and the predominant contract model between Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and its network physicians and hospitals.

"Under the AQC, our providers have achieved dramatically improved clinical outcomes for our members, including those with diabetes," said Dana Gelb Safran, Chief Performance Measurement & Improvement Officer at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "Within the first four years of their participation, AQC providers worked in new ways with their chronically ill patients and succeeded in bringing 74 percent of these patients into optimal clinical control compared to 62 percent nationally. This improved clinical control of patients with serious chronic illnesses is vital to avoiding complications later – such as heart attacks, strokes, kidney failure, blindness, and amputations – that are both costly and devastating to quality of life. The improved control achieved among diabetic patients alone under the AQC model has helped to avoid hundreds of these devastating health events each year."

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not–for–profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We're the trusted health plan for more than 25,000Massachusetts employers and are committed to

working with others in a spirit of shared responsibility to make quality health care affordable. Consistent with our corporate promise to always put our 2.8 million members first, we're rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

About the Health of America Report series
This is the fourteenth study of the Blue Cross Blue Shield: The Health of America Report® series, a collaboration between BCBSA and Blue Health Intelligence, which uses a market-leading claims database to uncover key trends and insights into health care affordability and access to care. For more information, visit https://www.bcbs.com/the-health-of-america/reports.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide health care coverage for one in three Americans. For more information on the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and its member companies, please visit BCBS.com. We encourage you to connect with us on Facebook, check out our videos on YouTube, follow us on Twitter, and check out the BCBS Blog for up-to-date information about BCBSA.

About Blue Health Intelligence
Blue Health Intelligence (BHI) is the nation's premier resource for data-driven insights about health care trends and best practices, promoting healthier lives and more affordable access to safe and effective care. BHI leverages a team of analytics experts and advanced technology, coupled with access to the greatest number of health care claims—172 million lives—gathered over 10 years in a safe, HIPAA-compliant, secure database. The resulting conformed, reliable data set has the broadest, deepest pool of integrated medical and pharmacy claims, reflecting medical utilization in every ZIP code. Blue Health Intelligence (BHI) is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. BHI is a trade name of Health Intelligence Company, LLC. www.bluehealthintelligence.com.

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