

quick connections

November 6, 1998

Where 'service' is not an optional word

In speaking to employees of BCBSF's newly incorporated subsidiary at an employee appreciation and recognition event, First Coast Service Options President and CEO Curtis Lord noted the following accomplishments:

- *We continue to be one of the nation's largest Medicare operations—last year we processed almost 56 million claims, responded to more than 2.8 million customer inquiries and issued almost \$9 billion of benefit payments.*

- *We reduced our operating costs and increased our productivity by continuously improving our business processes and employing a variety of sophisticated new technology.*

- *We formed a partnership with our counterparts in Texas and South Carolina that we are currently using to pursue new Medicare Integrity Program contracts.*

- *We saved the Medicare Program more than \$400 million through our Program Safeguard activities.*

- *We continued to distinguish ourselves as a maintainer, installer and operator of the Florida Shared System and again performed flawlessly as a Common Working File host.*

- *We maintained our strong commitment to customer satisfaction, winning awards for our beneficiary outreach programs and developing new and creative provider education programs not for the Southeast.*

- *We recently received a green rating—the best possible rating—for our Medicare Part A and Part B Year 2000 Readiness.*



Cheers for our own super hero

Three cheers for Mario Price, a security officer stationed at FCC1 in Jacksonville on Oct. 8 when Caroll Diane Johnson choked on a piece of chicken in the cafeteria.

When Johnson's lunch mate tried to perform the Heimlich maneuver to no avail, another employee alerted Price, trained as a First Responder, who rushed to Johnson's rescue. Johnson suffers from asthma, further complicating the situation. Price performed the maneuver, dislodging the chicken on the second try; and took her to the nurse's station for further assistance. Security in the meantime had alerted Jacksonville's fire and rescue squad, who arrived on the scene afterward and commended Price for his good work.

"I felt that I was going to black out and I was afraid that was it—I'd never get to see my first grandchild that is due in February," says Johnson, a quality analyst in North OPS support. "There's no doubt in my mind he saved my life. I'm truly, truly grateful."

"What if" advertising campaign continues

What if you haven't caught the BCBSF television commercial running since Oct. 12? You still have about 10 days to see it. Running during the number one rated newscasts in many markets, the "What if you didn't have to worry about health care" commercials are part of a national campaign developed by Foote, Cone & Belding, a leading advertising agency. Our spots are scheduled to air through Nov. 16 in Fort Myers/Naples, Gainesville, Jacksonville, Miami/Fort Lauderdale, Mobile/Pensacola, Orlando/Daytona Beach, Panama City, Tallahassee, Tampa/St. Petersburg and West Palm Beach. We also are running print ads in statewide and regional business publications through November.

United Way campaign needs your help

Three weeks into the seven-week United Way campaign, about ten percent of employees had pledged close to \$400,000. More than half was contributed by 159 Leadership Circle members who pledged about \$207,000.

United Way funded programs help people in need. And, remember, the money raised stays in our local areas.

BCBSF's goal is to raise \$750,000 in total contributions. Rallies continue through Nov. 20. Your help is greatly need. Please give generously.

Y2K changes made to RBMS billing system

Successfully preparing for the Year 2000 date change (and all the dire consequences predicted when computers mistake "00" as the year 1900 not 2000) is a top BCBSF priority. We have assembled a special project team and devoted significant resources to minimizing disruption to our business come midnight Jan. 1, 2000.

Our RBMS membership and billing system is the first of our "mission critical" systems (processes vital to providing customer service) to be tested and implemented for the new millennium. Work continues to address all BCBSF mission critical systems.

Interested in reading more about the Y2K problem? Try the Internet. One site is: <http://www.year2000.com>. Note: This reference is provided for your convenience only. BCBSF does not control this site and is not responsible for its contents. Reference to this site does not suggest any endorsement of the materials on the site or any association with its operation.



Customer Satisfaction



Market Leadership



Financial Strength



Public Understanding



Org. Effectiveness



Delivery Systems



National Association

If you think you can 99.9% of the time—you'll be ahead of your competition.

VO is on a roll

Physicians and hospitals alike are getting on the Virtual Office bandwagon as it rolls out across the North GBU. Some 1,335 physicians and four hospitals are currently connected through 51 sites, with 38 contracts to plug in another 225 physicians and 15 hospitals ready to go. Additionally, Shands and Nemours hospitals, representing 1,000+ physicians are close to signing on.

Through Oct. 31, we have received 35,916 electronic transactions covering eligibility, benefits information and medical clearances. The VO roll-out team has seen weekly usage nearly triple since September as physicians get on line and their staffs learn how time saving and easy VO is to use.



BlueCross BlueShield of Florida

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Once upon a hurricane season...

Hurricane season runs through November, and it's a season BCBSF watches closely.

Our hurricane preparedness team tracks storms through a national weather service in Wichita, Kan. (Satellite transmissions to the center of the continent are more accurate than those near the ocean.) We've contracted with this service since 1994—and have found it consistently accurate.

For instance, when Hurricane Georges was approaching the Florida Keys, our service predicted it would go through the Keys, into the Gulf and make landfall between Pensacola and New Orleans. The accuracy of Hurricane Georges forecasts parallels all past predictions. By the way, all official hurricane updates are transmitted at 5 a.m., 11 a.m., 5 p.m., and 11 p.m.

Employees can tap into the information as it applies to BCBSF offices through the Hurricane Hotline at 1-800-791-6062.

CGBU Congestive Heart Failure Program could help up to 1,700 members

The Central GBU is gearing up for the roll-out this month of the expanded Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) Program, an illness management program that provides care support to help patients cope with the disease.

CHF is caused by inadequate blood circulation in heart tissue and lungs. The disease afflicts about 5 million Americans, with 400,000 new cases diagnosed each year. It accounts for 200,000 deaths and hospitalization costs topping \$10 billion annually.

Identifying and controlling CHF symptoms before they become acute can slow the progress of the illness, improve the patient's quality of life and prevent hospitalizations.

Launched as a pilot program in February 1997 in Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties, the initial CHF study included 186 commercial and Medicare & More members and showed significant improvements in outcomes. In the study:

- 64 percent of participants reported improvement in their perceived quality of life;
- 19 percent experienced improvements in their functional status;
- frequency of CHF inpatient days decreased 29 percent;
- CHF medical costs decreased 58 percent; and
- participants' overall medical costs decreased 38 percent.

The CHF Program is being expanded to include all counties in the Central GBU where Health Options operates.

Now's the time to make benefit changes!

Want to increase the amount of life insurance on yourself, your spouse or your children? Or enroll in the Selectfund flexible spending account?

Once a year you can make changes to your Blue Ribbon employee benefits, including the health, dental, vision, life insurance and Selectfund programs.

This year the annual enrollment period runs Nov. 9-20. To make changes, call the annual enrollment phone lines during that time at: 1-800-477-3736, ext. 50121.

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