

## **Baptist Health Systems (Dade County) Termination Communication Plan**

### **Purpose/Background**

This strategic communications plan provides the company with a coordinated, specific course of action in communicating to key audiences the resignation of Baptist Health Systems (Dade County) from BCBSF's provider networks for all lines of business, effective September 30, 2000 for most Baptist facilities.

Baptist Health Systems is considered a premier provider in the south Miami market and is comprised of several hospitals and one ambulatory surgical center. These facilities include Baptist Hospital, Baptist Children's Hospital, South Miami Hospital, Homestead Hospital, Baptist Medical Plazas at Kings Bay, Coral Gables and Westchester, and Baptist Health Center. While the hospitals and health centers have indicated a termination date of September 30, the Baptist Medical Arts Center termination becomes effective February 28, 2001. In addition, Baptist's Mariners Hospital does not appear to be part of the termination.

Baptist Health Systems noticed BCBSF on June 28, 2000, of its intent to terminate its provider contracts with BCBSF in a dispute over rate increases. This notice was delivered in compliance with the 90-day contractual requirement to inform BCBSF. The notice stipulated that, should BCBSF not accept Baptist's proposed rates, it would not be willing to extend the contract beyond the 90-day period. Baptist is requesting rate increases of 88 percent for outpatient services and 39 percent for inpatient services. In 1999, BCBSF negotiated a five percent rate increase with the health system. Baptist currently maintains the highest compensated BCBSF provider facilities in the entire state.

BCBSF member services currently comprise nine percent of Baptist's annual total revenue. Baptist also reports extremely high bed occupancy rates of 75 to 85 percent, which analysts attribute to the health system's ability to attract a substantial, cash paying inpatient population from Latin America.

Baptist Health System's hospitals are considered the premier health care facilities in the south Miami market and alternative facilities are either not considered as attractive or provide the same breadth of comprehensive health services as Baptist. For the period of October 1998 through September 1999, almost 48,000 BCBSF members utilized Baptist facilities. Major group accounts impacted by this termination would include the Miami Dade County Employees, Miami Community College and XXXXXXXXXXXX.

Alternative facilities in the region such as Deering Hospital, Kendall Regional Hospital, Healthsouth Larkin Hospital, Healthsouth Doctors Hospital, Mercy Hospital and Jackson Memorial are not considered by members and patients as attractive alternatives.

### **Overarching Communication Objective:**

Reinforce the stability and trust customers have with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida and promote the continued strength of our provider networks in Dade County. Successfully communicate to members available, alternative solutions that will continue to provide them with quality health care, at reasonable costs.

### **Communication Goals:**

- To maintain member confidence in BCBSF and its health plans.
- To communicate to key audiences timely and accurately to avoid member confusion and mistrust.
- To maintain confidence in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield brand.
- To reassure members of alternative options available to them in south Dade county.
- To communicate BCBSF's commitment to protect customers who will need hospital services in south Dade County.

### **Communication Strategies:**

- Integrate communications between corporate offices and the SGBU in order to present a unified, cohesive message to key audiences.
- Position BCBSF as working on behalf of its members, ensuring that they have an array of affordable, quality health plans that provide access to a broad network of doctors and hospitals.
- Proactively communicate to group decision makers, members, network physicians, BCBSF employees and other key audiences of alternative options for receiving hospital services in the Dade County area.
- Reassure BCBSF members in Dade County by communicating the strength of our networks and alternative care measures in place to protect customers who will require hospital services.
- Minimize public and/or media discussions of negotiation and contracting details related to Baptist (Dade) Health System.
- Prevent or mitigate the development of negative media attention; specifically a public perception of health plans and providers engaged in discussions that focus on dollars and not providing the best patient care.

## **Key Audiences:**

- Customers
  - Group decision makers (under 10; 10+)
  - Individual pay customers (under 65)
  - Members of group accounts who use Baptist
  - Members of group accounts in medical service area
  - National and statewide accounts (FEP, NASCO and State Group)
  
- Providers
  - Primary care physicians
  - Specialists (surgeons)
  - Hospital administrators
  - Ambulatory surgical centers
  - Ancillary providers
  - Baptist physicians
  
- Agents, brokers and consultants
  
- Regulatory or Oversight Agencies (DSGI, DOI, HCFA, AHCA, OPM)
  
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association
  
- Legislators (state and federal)
  
- Local community leaders/general public in Dade and surrounding counties
  
- Provider and trade associations (FMA, FHA, FAHMO)
  
- Media (as required)
  
- Internal
  - South GBU staff
  - National, statewide and South GBU operations and marketing staffs
  - Corporate Operations staff
  - BCBSF Board of Directors
  - Senior Leadership
  - Virtual Office staff and Provider-Focused Teams
  - Other BCBSF staff (GLR, Health Business Policy and Development, Legal, etc.)

## Key Messages

- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) continually strives to provide and maintain access to the most appropriate, cost-effective quality care for our members through our provider network agreements.
- On occasion, a hospital may determine that its business goals conflict with BCBSF's goals and the interests of our members. In that regard, Baptist Health Systems, located in Dade County, has indicated that it no longer wishes to be a participating provider with BCBSF and its HMO subsidiary Health Options, effective September 30 for most of its facilities. The termination is effective for most BCBSF lines of business, including HMO, PPO, Traditional and Medicare HMO. BCBSF Medicare Supplemental Insurance members are not affected.
- From now until September 30, it is business as usual for BCBSF members and Baptist facilities. Members should continue any course of treatment or appointments they have scheduled at Baptist facilities. We will process claims for services, inpatient and outpatient, at Baptist Health Systems as "participating" for services until September 30.
- BCBSF members requesting covered services after September 30 may continue to use Baptist Health Systems' facilities on a "non participating" basis. However, members who choose this out-of-network option could experience significant out-of-pocket expenses.
- BCBSF and Baptist are working together to minimize potential disruptions to our members who are Baptist patients and to develop continuity of care processes for our members who are undergoing active treatment, in conformity with state and federal requirements.
- As always, members should go to the nearest hospital for emergency services, regardless of the facility's participatory status. BCBSF members may still receive emergency services at Baptist facilities.
- Baptist Health Systems has demanded payment rate increases averaging more than 50 percent, a demand that would severely undermine BCBSF's ability to provide its members with access to health care services that are affordable.
- BCBSF is aggressively negotiating with Baptist Health Systems to resolve outstanding fee issues prior to the termination date. In addition, we are engaged in discussions with alternative Dade county facilities to maintain and enhance quality care options for our members that will allow us to continue to excel at meeting the health care needs of our members in the south Miami area.

- BCBSF's commitment to our members is to continue working with them to offer caring solutions to their health care needs. We appreciate our relationship with you, and thank you for your continued confidence in Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida.
- In the event we are not able to reach an agreement with Baptist Health Systems, BCBSF will help and assist members and their physicians to select another hospital in their area. Members should call the Customer Service number listed on their BCBSF identification cards for assistance.

### **Action Steps**