

# News Release



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## **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Introduces HMO in Charlotte County**

TAMPA -- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) today announced that its HMO is expanding into Charlotte County, offering area residents a quality, affordable alternative to old-style insurance programs.

"Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida's HMO is growing because it offers patients quality and value not available with other health care programs," said Donald J. Van Dyke, west coast region vice president for BCBSF. "We place importance on preventing illness, assuring patients receive quality care and offering a wide range of physician choices."

Several studies confirm HMOs' commitment to providing quality care, with an emphasis on prevention. According to a report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, HMO physicians feel more free to hospitalize patients and to order tests and procedures. Another study, which was published in *Medical Care*, said physician groups with a higher concentration of HMO patients were more likely to recommend preventive screenings for cervical cancer than groups with more patients in old-style insurance plans.

Charlotte County residents who choose the company's HMO will benefit from:

- preventive care including immunizations, prenatal care and annual physicals;
- a network of local doctors that has been screened for quality;
- the freedom to personally choose their primary care physician and the flexibility to change doctors; and
- the ability to receive hospital care at either Charlotte Regional Medical Center in Punta Gorda or Bon Secours-St. Joseph Hospital in Port Charlotte.

BCBSF is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies nationwide. A financially strong, tax-paying mutual insurance company, BCBSF is subject to the same regulation by the Department of Insurance as other insurers operating in the state.

