

Press Releases

NEWS RELEASE

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BLUE CROSS OF CALIFORNIA LAUNCHES STATE'S FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND MEDICARE PLAN

NEWBURY PARK, Calif. – Blue Cross of California (Blue Cross) today announced it is reaching out to Medicare eligible Californians with the launch of SmartValue, an affordable new health plan and the state's first Medicare Advantage Private-Fee-For-Service (PFFS) plan. SmartValue has been approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for Blue Cross to offer in San Francisco, Fresno, Santa Barbara and Yolo counties.

With monthly premiums of \$14 per month* in San Francisco, Fresno and Yolo counties and \$50 per month* in Santa Barbara County, SmartValue offers coverage for medical care and services including hospital and physician services, inpatient hospital visits, emergency room services, routine vision, hearing and physical exams, and diagnostic tests including x-rays and laboratory services. The plan also offers discounts on prescription drugs.

"SmartValue presents Californians who are looking for more affordable health insurance coverage with a new value-driven choice," said Susan Rawlings, Blue Cross' general manager of senior services. "Following Blue Cross' recent launch of Tonik, a health plan targeted to reach California's uninsured young invincibles, we're very pleased to offer California's Medicare eligibles with this new option."

SmartValue is unique because enrollees may see any doctor or specialist of their choice as long as the physician accepts Medicare payment and agrees to the terms and conditions of the plan. In addition, enrollees are able to see a specialist without a referral. Reimbursement to physicians under this plan is the same as the Medicare approved fee schedule. Both the Medicare Part A and Part B deductibles are covered. However, some services do require a member co-pay, such as \$10 for an office visit.

Medicare eligible Californians with both Parts A and B of Medicare may apply for the SmartValue plan as long as they reside in one of the four counties where it has been approved. To learn more about SmartValue, call Blue Cross of California at 1-800-765-2585 (TTY/TDD 1-877-247-1657).

Blue Cross of California is one of the state's largest health insurers and together with its California affiliates the company serves more than 7.6 million medical members. Headquartered in Southern California, Blue Cross of California offers a flexible product portfolio with a broad range of options for small, medium and large groups, as well as individual plans for people without access to group coverage, seniors and consumers who are eligible for state sponsored programs. Blue Cross of California is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Association and can be found on the web at www.bluecrossca.com.

** Current monthly premium is in addition to the monthly Medicare Part B premium. Refer to the policy for complete list of coverage, conditions, restrictions, limitations and exclusions.*