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**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico Announces
Three New Prescription Drug Plans for Medicare Beneficiaries**

Plans Will Include Zero Deductible and Low Copayment Options

(ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.) – October 3, 2005 – Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico (BCBSNM), has introduced three innovative Blue MedicareRxSM prescription drug plans that will offer a broad range of prescription drug options to Medicare beneficiaries. The three plans, also known as Part D plans, were recently approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Enrollment for these plans begins November 15, 2005, and coverage first becomes effective January 1, 2006.

“Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico is committed to meeting the needs of seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries by introducing health plans that are easy to understand, easy on the budget, and easy to use,” said Liz Watrin, BCBSNM president. “Our new Blue MedicareRx plans offer this ease, and provide important prescription drug coverage for Medicare beneficiaries.”

The three new guaranteed-issue Blue MedicareRx plans will help beneficiaries manage current and future prescription drug expenses. They offer a broad list of covered brand-name and generic medications, and the convenience of an extensive pharmacy network that includes major chains such as Walgreens, Wal-Mart, Smith’s, and many independent pharmacies. Plan members can simply show their Blue MedicareRx card at any one of BCBSNM’s participating pharmacies to access their benefits.

Additionally, the new plans can be paired with a Medicare Supplement plan for added flexibility and thorough coverage. While Medicare Supplement plans cover hospital and physician expenses, prescription drug plans add coverage for medication expenses. Beneficiaries can also obtain prescription drug benefits by enrolling in a Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plan, such as BCBSNM’s Blue Medicare PPO plan.

The new Blue MedicareRx plans include:

- **Value plan (\$0 deductible, \$28.58 monthly premium):** The Value plan includes a low 30-day retail copayment of \$5 for generic drugs, \$40 for preferred brand-name drugs and \$60 for brand name drugs. Members pay this copayment amount up until the point that they reach \$2,250 in annual drug costs.
- **Plus plan: (\$0 deductible, \$45.82 monthly premium):** The Plus plan offers a low 30-day retail copayment of \$3 for generic drugs, \$20 for preferred brand-name drugs and \$50 for brand name drugs. Members pay this copayment amount up until the point that they reach \$2,250 in annual drug costs.
- **Standard government plan (\$250 deductible, \$28.03 monthly premium):** The Standard plan includes a 25 percent coinsurance once the \$250 deductible is met. Members pay this copayment amount up until the point that they reach \$2,250 in annual drug costs.

With all three plans, members pay 100 percent of prescription drug expenses once they reach \$2,250 in annual drug costs. After their yearly out-of-pocket costs reach \$3,600, they pay the greater of: \$2 for generic or a preferred brand drug that is a multiple source drug and \$5 for all other drugs, or 5 percent coinsurance. A 90-day mail-order option is also available through Walgreens. Plan members who choose this option save one month of copayments.

“Medicare beneficiaries who are educated about their coverage options will be better equipped to select a plan based on their current and expected future prescription drug usage,” stated Watrin. “They should also consider each plan’s formulary and pharmacy network when making a decision. As a trusted name for New Mexico residents, Blue Cross is dedicated to being available to answer beneficiaries’ questions about the new Medicare prescription drug coverage and helping them understand their options.”

The initial enrollment period begins November 15, 2005, and continues through May 15, 2006. BCBSNM will offer enrollment by phone, online, via mail, and through Blue Cross’ network of certified brokers who are available to assist beneficiaries with selecting a plan. Beneficiaries who do not enroll during this time period will be locked out of the program until November 15, 2006. In addition, they will be assessed a one percent late enrollment penalty for each month they choose not to enroll. In subsequent years, enrollment will be available from November 15 through December 31.

While enrollment doesn’t start until November 15, seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries can call 888-285-2254 or visit www.bcbsnm.com to order an enrollment kit or get more information about Blue MedicareRx.

For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage, visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227, TTY/TDD users call 877-486-2048) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico:

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