

NEWS RELEASE

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BCBSNC and Wilmington Health Launch ACO to Benefit Southeastern North Carolina Patients

Insurer and provider work together to improve quality, affordability and patient experience

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. – Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) and Wilmington Health, a multi-specialty physician group practice in southeastern North Carolina, will establish a physician-led Accountable Care Organization (ACO). The ACO will be one of the first insurer-provider collaborations of its kind in the region. At its core, it will rely on transparency and coordination between the parent organizations and throughout the health care system to improve care and efficiencies while reining in costs.

“We’re on our way to a health care system in North Carolina that rewards doctors and hospitals for quality, not quantity of services. Organizations like these are an important step as we continue down this path,” said Dr. Don Bradley, BCBSNC chief medical officer. “Wilmington Health has already shown leadership in improving quality through collaboration and teamwork. Together we can achieve our shared goals of improving efficiency and health outcomes while ultimately lowering health care costs for our customers.”

The ACO model is still being adopted and defined across the health care industry, but typically involves doctors and other providers who voluntarily come together to provide high quality, coordinated and efficient care for a patient population. The ACO model uses innovative reimbursement models, collaboration, and transparency across the participating organizations to achieve these goals.

While still in the planning stages, the newly formed organization will focus on the following areas:

- Preventative health and wellness
- Chronic disease management
- Care coordination and outreach programs for at-risk patients
- Reduction of avoidable hospital admissions and readmissions
- Improved efficiencies
- Overall health of the population served
- Reduced health plan costs and improved quality by partnering with employers in the market

Wilmington Health provides care for more than 30 specialties, such as primary care, cardiology, gastroenterology, endocrinology and most recently oncology and rheumatology care. One example of the BCBSNC and Wilmington Health collaboration will be the development of a new oncology

program to improve health outcomes by ensuring that all oncology patients benefit from treatments that follow the latest evidence-based research.

“With this physician-led model, we hope to improve the communication and coordination with other providers in the community and develop new partnerships,” said Jeff James, Wilmington Health CEO. “We are excited about this relationship. This is the type of innovation that will be at the forefront of transforming the health care delivery system, and we greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with a respected industry leader like BCBSNC.”

About BCBSNC:

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is a leader in delivering innovative health care products, services and information to more than 3.6 million members, including approximately 900,000 served on behalf of other Blue Plans. For 78 years, the company has served its patients by offering health insurance at a competitive price and has served the people of North Carolina through support of community organizations, programs and events that promote good health. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina was named one of the World’s Most Ethical Companies by Ethisphere Institute in 2012. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Visit BCBSNC online at bcbsnc.com.

About Wilmington Health:

Wilmington Health has provided premier health care to the residents of Southeastern North Carolina for nearly 40 years. It is the largest fully integrated, multi-specialty medical group practice in the area. Wilmington Health has 19 locations, including Convenient Care and Urgent Care. For more information about Wilmington Health, please call 910.815.6153, or visit www.wilmingtonhealth.com.

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