



BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska Offers Free Generics *Health Insurer Emphasizes Money-Saving Value*

Omaha, NE (November 30, 2007) — Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska is offering the majority of its customers* the opportunity to receive **free generic drugs** during January, February and March 2008. During this three-month period, eligible members* and their covered family members who have a prescription filled for a generic drug will pay nothing out of pocket at participating pharmacies. The *Free Generics* campaign is designed not only to help members with their health care costs, but also to underscore the health insurer's endorsement of the safety and effectiveness of generic prescription drugs.

"Using generic drugs whenever they are available and appropriate can save our members a considerable amount of money, but generics continue to be underutilized," said Clint Williams, Pharm. D., Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska's director of Pharmacy. "The *Free Generics* campaign gives our members an even greater incentive to explore available and appropriate generic drugs."

Generic drugs offer the same quality, strength, purity and stability as brand name drugs, but cost much less. According to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska data, the average cost of a 30-day supply of a generic prescription drug is \$22 compared to an average of \$123 for a brand name drug.

Currently, of all prescriptions filled among Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska members, 57.2 percent are generics. Just a 1 percent increase in generic use would save the company's members an estimated **\$3.3 million** each year.

How it works

Under the Free Generics program, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska will waive the copay/coinsurance for generic drugs for eligible members* January 1 through March 31, 2008.

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If the member is already taking a generic prescription drug, he will pay nothing for his refills at participating Rx Nebraska retail pharmacies or through the PrimeMail mail service program.

If the member is currently taking a brand name drug, he should ask his doctor if a generic drug is available and appropriate, and if so, request a new prescription as soon as possible. Again, if the prescription is filled with a generic at a participating pharmacy or through PrimeMail, the copay/coinsurance will be waived January 1 through March 31, 2008.

Information at your fingertips

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska developed a special website, www.genericsfromneblues.com, to provide more information about the money-saving value of generic drugs. It provides information on price differences between top brand names and generics, which brand name drugs have generic equivalents, plus much more on the topic directly from the Food and Drug Administration.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, insures or provides benefit administration to nearly 717,000 people. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska is a mutual insurance company dedicated to providing the health and wellness solutions that people value most.

***Most Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska customers are eligible to take advantage of the Free Generics program January 1 through March 31, 2008.** However, some members are not eligible to participate:

- Customers covered under a Medicare Supplemental, Medicare Part D (MedicareBlue Rx) or Medicare PPO plan. Medicare Supplemental customers aren't eligible to participate because these plans do not include benefits for prescription drugs. Customers covered under Medicare Blue Rx or Medicare PPO aren't eligible to participate because these plans are governed by a seven-state regional body—this isn't solely a BCBSNE plan.
- Individuals covered under the Comprehensive Health Insurance Pool (CHIP). This isn't a BCBSNE plan; the company administers it for the State of Nebraska.
- Employees of groups that do not use BCBSNE's pharmacy program (prescription drug benefits are provided/administered by another carrier).
- Federal Employee Program (FEP) members. This program's pharmacy benefits aren't provided by BCBSNE.
- Customers covered under a plan that offers discounts, but not coverage for prescription drugs. One example: The BlueBasics individual plan enables members to take advantage of pharmacy discounts BCBSNE has negotiated, but does not pay benefits for prescription drugs.

Also, if the member's plan requires satisfaction of a deductible before prescription drug benefits are payable, that deductible will need to be satisfied first before the member is eligible to participate in the Free Generics program.

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