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State Commission Preparing Recommendations to Improve Patient Safety
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation awards \$75,000 to support project

DETROIT, June 13, 2005—After analyzing data gathered from across the state, the State Commission on Patient Safety is preparing to make recommendations to Governor Jennifer Granholm on how to improve patient safety in Michigan.

Supported by a \$75,000 grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation and additional funding from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan corporation and the Michigan Health and Safety Coalition, the commission has been gathering and analyzing data gleaned from Michigan residents, health organizations, medical providers and various other organizations interested in patient safety. In November, the commission will issue its report to the governor on how to reduce errors across the entire health care spectrum.

The commission was created by Public Act 119 of 2004 which authorized the governor to designate an existing organization to act as this body. Governor Granholm asked the Michigan Health and Safety Coalition to serve as the commission.

The coalition is a group of 15 Michigan organizations that includes health plans, major employers, health professional associations and hospital, physician, consumer and labor organizations. Its mission is to help improve health care quality and patient safety across all care settings. The coalition agreed to serve as the commission, and held three public hearings last November in Lansing, Southfield and Traverse City seeking ideas and recommendations on how to improve patient safety.

“The State Commission on Patient Safety is grateful that the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation has acknowledged the commission’s important work,” said Larry Wagenknecht, chief executive officer of the Michigan Pharmacists Association and a commission member. “The commission’s report will provide Governor Granholm and the Michigan Legislature with a blueprint for making positive changes in how health care is safely delivered to patients in our state.”

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A public meeting will be held at which the commission will review the work done up to this point on its report to the governor. The meeting will be held from 11 a.m. to noon on Thursday, June 30 at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan’s Lyon Meadows facility, 53200 Grand River Ave. in New Hudson. The public is invited to attend.

“Research efforts are essential in identifying systemic problems that allow medical errors to occur in health care settings,” said Ira Strumwasser, executive director and CEO of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation. “We’re confident our support of the coalition’s efforts in its role as the State Commission on Patient Safety will result in recommendations that will lead to improved health care for all Michigan residents.”

The Michigan Health and Safety Coalition was formed in 2000. Members include Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan; DaimlerChrysler Corporation; Ford Motor Company; General Motors Corporation; International Union, UAW; Michigan Association of Health Plans; Michigan Consumer Health Care Coalition; Michigan Department of Community Health; Michigan Education Special Services Association; Michigan Health & Hospital Association; Michigan Nurses Association; Michigan Osteopathic Association; MPRO; Michigan Pharmacists Association, and Michigan State Medical Society.

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation is dedicated to improving the health of Michigan residents through the support of research and innovative health programs. BCBSM Foundation grant programs are conducted in Michigan by Michigan-based researchers and nonprofit organizations to address issues of quality and costs of care, access to care, and community health.

The BCBSM Foundation is the philanthropic affiliate of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, incorporated separately from BCBSM. The foundation is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. None of the foundation’s grant-making resources comes from BCBSM customer premium payments. The foundation was funded through an endowment from Michigan physicians in 1983 and from proceeds of an earlier prescription drug lawsuit settlement. For additional information, please visit the BCBSM Foundation Web site at www.bcbsm.com/foundation.

For more information about the Michigan Health and Safety Coalition and the State Commission on Patient Safety, visit www.mihealthandsafety.org/statecommission.