

Capital BlueCross Chief Medical Officer Delivers Keynote Address at Opioid Conference

HARRISBURG, Pa., Sept. 6, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Capital BlueCross chief medical officer and senior vice president of clinical solutions, Dr. Jennifer Chambers, today provided a keynote address at the *Magellan Health - Leading Humanity to Healthy, Vibrant Lives* conference in Lancaster. The event focused on finding solutions to the opioid epidemic, bringing together experts from the medical, healthcare, and law enforcement fields.

During the conference, Capital BlueCross awarded Compass Mark a \$5,000 grant for leading addiction prevention efforts. The non-profit organization, based in Lancaster and Lebanon counties, works to prevent addiction through education, skill building, and community mobilization.

Dr. Chambers has extensive knowledge in opioid misuse disorder and the evolution of the opioid epidemic. Her background gives her unique insight into what patients, doctors, and others in healthcare are faced with when it comes to opioids.

"We need to get rid of the stigma, and recognize the medical condition that is opioid addiction," said Dr. Chambers. "As we work together, I am certain that we can make gains in better monitoring of prescriptions and prescribing practices, population health management, access to care, and treatment for opioid use disorder."

According to the *Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Health of America Report: America's Opioid Epidemic and its Effect on the Nation's Commercially Insured*, one in five Blues members has been prescribed opioids - a staggering number that can have devastating impacts. According to Dr. Chambers, dosage and duration matter when it comes to the risk of addiction.

Capital BlueCross imposed quantity limits on opioids in July 2017, resulting in a 42% reduction in opioids prescribed to Capital BlueCross members. While these are promising numbers, Dr. Chambers says there is still more work to be done.

Capital BlueCross has been a leader in fighting the opioid epidemic. Along with quantity limits, the company has taken several proactive steps to prevent opioid misuse and to help those in recovery, including:

- Advocating for non-opioid pharmacological therapies first and enhanced coverages for non-pharmacological treatments for pain such as acupuncture, bio-feedback, and chiropractic care.
- Continuously working to improve clinical management of opioid use and how we help our members manage pain.
- Actively supporting drug take-back initiatives, including the ability to safely discard unused medications at our Capital Blue health and wellness centers.
- Expanding the use of the safety and monitoring program from CVS Health, which enables pharmacists to identify and report suspected opioid misuse to a member's doctor and other prescribers. This includes alerts to prescribers and dispensers of opioids when members receive an opioid prescription from more than one prescriber, or for more than one drug class, such as the addition of benzodiazepines like Xanax.
- Providing medication assisted treatment, which covers medication prescribed to help individuals overcome addiction, as a covered benefit for our members.
- Partnering with experts to provide programs offering personalized support to our members dealing with chronic pain; these programs are targeted to help alleviate symptoms and improve quality of life.

- Contributing \$200,000 since 2014 to enable law enforcement officers in our service are to purchase naloxone, the life-saving medication that can revive a person suffering from a potentially fatal overdose.

"Pennsylvania's death rate from opioids hasn't peaked yet," said Dr. Chambers. "It's a stark reminder how everyone in healthcare has a stake in preventing opioid addiction from needlessly taking any more lives."

About Capital BlueCross

Capital BlueCross, headquartered in Harrisburg, Pa., is the leading health solutions and insurance company in Central Pennsylvania and the Lehigh Valley. A partner in the community's health for 80 years, Capital BlueCross offers health insurance products, services and technology solutions that provide peace of mind to consumers and promote health and wellness for our customers.

More than a health insurer, the company delivers innovative solutions through a family of diversified businesses that is creating a healthier future and lowering health care costs. Among these solutions are patient-focused care models, leading-edge data analytics, and digital health technologies. Additionally, Capital BlueCross is growing a network of Capital Blue health and wellness centers that provide in-person service and inspiration to help people reach their health goals. Capital BlueCross is an independent licensee of the BlueCross BlueShield Association. For more information, visit capbluecross.com.

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