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**University of Michigan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and The Society of Hospital Medicine to Bring Project BOOST Statewide in Michigan**

*Michigan's Leaders in Hospital Care Collaborate to Reduce Readmissions in 15 Hospitals*

**(Ann Arbor, Michigan – January 28, 2010)** The Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM), Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and the University of Michigan announced that the three organizations will collaborate on a statewide initiative in Michigan to reduce preventable readmissions to the hospital and emergency room visits.

Based on SHM's Project BOOST (Better Outcomes for Older Adults through Safer Transitions) model, the program will be managed by the University of Michigan in collaboration with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. The Michigan Blues provide and administer health benefits to 4.7 million Michigan residents.

Project BOOST helps hospitals reduce readmission rates by providing them with proven resources and expert mentoring to optimize the discharge transition process, enhance patient and family education practices, and improve the flow of information between inpatient and outpatient providers. Project BOOST was developed through a grant from The John A. Hartford Foundation.

The new program will soon select 15 hospital and physician care sites in Michigan to participate. Training will begin in May.

Each improvement team will be assigned a mentor to coach them through the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating Project BOOST at their site. Program participants will receive face-to-face training, monthly coaching sessions with their mentors, and a comprehensive toolkit to implement Project BOOST. Sites also participate in an online peer learning and collaboration network.

Unplanned readmissions to the hospital are costly and preventable, draining the resources, time, and energy of the patient, primary care physician, and hospital. Research in the April 2009 *New England Journal of Medicine* indicates that one in five hospitalized patients is readmitted to the hospital within a month of their discharge.

Nationally, unplanned readmissions cost Medicare \$17.4 billion each year, making estimates about the total cost even higher.

“This is a tremendous opportunity to improve patient safety, reduce readmissions, and study the impact of Project BOOST interventions through patient-level data. We are excited to have this opportunity to partner with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the University of Michigan, and commend their commitment to improve health care in Michigan,” said Mark Williams, MD, FHM, editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Hospital Medicine* and principal investigator for SHM’s Project BOOST. “We’re thrilled to be working with the state’s healthcare leaders to implement this critical program.”

University of Michigan is confident the sites in its new BOOST program will deliver results.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to work with not just Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, but also with the other physician organizations across our state to implement and share best practice ideas in transition of care” said Christopher Kim, MD, MBA, FHM, hospitalist at the University of Michigan and director of the state-wide collaborative program on transitions of care.

It selected BOOST based on its collaborative model and its comprehensive approach to a specific preventable problem.

“Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is confident that this project - like our other Value Partnership programs that focus on robust, state-wide, data-driven, quality improvement partnerships – will have a positive impact on thousands of Michigan lives,” said David Share, MD, MPH, senior associate medical director, Healthcare Quality, for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. “We look forward to helping hospitals, physicians, and patients work together to assure smooth transitions between inpatient and outpatient care and to reduce readmissions and improve the patient experience.”

“This kind of innovative, targeted program benefits both the patient and the healthcare provider by establishing better communication between all parties,” said Scott Flanders, MD, FHM, Director of Hospital Medicine at the University of Michigan and president of the Society of Hospital Medicine.

SHM is exploring opportunities to expand Project BOOST to more sites across the country, according to Dr. Flanders.

“Readmissions are a pervasive but preventable problem,” says Flanders, “Hospitalists are uniquely positioned to provide leadership within the hospital to promote positive system based changes that improve patient satisfaction and promote collaboration between hospitalists and primary care physicians.

## **Project BOOST Results**

Early results from other BOOST programs across the country have been promising.

At Piedmont Hospital in the Atlanta area, the rate of unplanned readmissions among patients under the age of 70 participating in BOOST is 8.5 percent, compared to 25.5 percent among nonparticipants. The rate among BOOST participants over the age of 70 was 22 percent versus 26 percent of nonparticipants at Piedmont Hospital.

When SSM St. Mary's Medical Center in St. Louis implemented BOOST at its 33-bed hospitalist unit, unplanned 30-day readmissions dropped from 12 to seven percent within three months. Patient satisfaction rates also increased markedly, from 52 to 68 percent.

Also in 2009, the University of Pennsylvania Health System awarded its annual Operational Quality and Safety Award to the Project BOOST implementation team at the hospital.

## **ABOUT SHM**

SHM is the premier medical society representing hospitalists. Over the past decade, studies have shown that hospitalists decrease patient lengths of stay, reduce hospital costs and readmission rates, all while increasing patient satisfaction. Hospital medicine is the fastest-growing specialty in modern healthcare, with over 31,000 hospitalists currently practicing and an upward growth trajectory in full force. For more information about SHM, visit [www.hospitalmedicine.org](http://www.hospitalmedicine.org).

## **ABOUT BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MICHIGAN**

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, a nonprofit organization, provides and administers health benefits to 4.7 million members residing in Michigan in addition to members of Michigan-headquartered groups who reside outside the state. The company offers a broad variety of plans including: Traditional Blue Cross Blue Shield; Blue Preferred<sup>®</sup>, Community Blue<sup>SM</sup> and Healthy Blue Incentives<sup>SM</sup> PPOs; Blue Care Network HMO; BCN Healthy Blue Living<sup>SM</sup>; Flexible Blue<sup>SM</sup> plans compatible with health savings accounts; Medicare Advantage; Part D Prescription Drug plans, and MyBlue<sup>SM</sup> products in the under-age-65 individual market. BCBSM also offers dental, vision and hearing plans. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more company information, visit [bcbsm.com](http://bcbsm.com).

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