The health care industry is moving through an unprecedented transformation. The continuing rise of medical costs, demand for medical services from an aging population and health care reform underscore the need for rapid, effective changes.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) is leading the charge to develop new, better ways to deliver and pay for medical services.

Transforming Health Care Delivery and Payment Practices
Value-based care models redefine how providers are compensated. Physicians are rewarded when they meet evidence-based goals that improve quality, safety and care for members while managing health care expenses. By shifting payment models toward greater provider accountability for cost and quality, BCBSIL aims to increase the value of health care services through:

• Lower total medical costs
• Lower rate of cost increases
• Better health outcomes
• Better member experiences
• Better access to needed services

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ACOs – An Alternative to the Traditional Fee-for-Service

A number of methods may be leveraged to recognize and incentivize providers who strive to improve health outcomes while keeping care affordable. Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) is one of them.

ACO is a model that links physicians, hospitals and other health care providers and aims to improve the health and satisfaction of a specific population. The ACO is designed to focus on members’ health, thereby reducing costs of unnecessary hospital admissions, readmissions, emergency room visits and duplicate services.

For example, one Illinois Accountable Care Organization achieved impressive results*, including:

- A three-year cumulative reduction of 6 percent total cost of care relative to the market
- Lowered annual inpatient cost trend by 2.6 percent
- Lowered annual outpatient cost trend by 3 percent
- Lower emergency room cases per 1,000 members, outpatient surgery per 1,000 members and advanced imaging per 1,000 members

Strategy for the Future

The ACO model represents an evolving approach to align provider incentives and accountability to measurably improve health outcomes and reduce costs of care.

BCBSIL is committed to continuously evaluating our programs, using advanced technology and support services to make more informed decisions for existing programs. We will continue to develop new models with shared goals of making health care more cost-effective while improving our members’ health.

*Cost savings are based on historical claims data and are not a guarantee of future savings.

BCBSIL Illinois ACOs

BCBSIL currently has ACO arrangements with nine organizations:

- Advocate Health Care
- Alexian Brothers Clinically Integrated Network
- Illinois Health Partners
- Independent Physician ACO
- North Shore University
- Northwest Community Health System
- OSF (Order of St. Francis) Health System
- Presence Health Care
- Kane County IPA

Through these arrangements, BCBSIL members have access to independently contracted ACO providers including more than 50 hospitals and facilities and nearly 6,000 physicians. The ACOs will be able to serve both eligible fully insured and self-funded PPO members in Chicago and surrounding areas.

In addition to these ACOs, BCBSIL plans to implement other ACOs arrangements throughout the state of Illinois in 2015.
Heat & Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Local 17

Did you know that Heat & Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Local 17 has one of the largest mechanical insulation training facilities in North America? Brian Glynn, Business Manager of Local 17, says, “We have always provided the best trained and safest workers in the mechanical insulation industry, but the new 17,000-square-foot training facility has taken us to new heights. It also gives us the ability to bring someone into the training facility, who knows nothing about mechanical insulation, and show them why our trade is so vital to conserving energy.”

“I don’t think there is a jobsite or installation process that we cannot replicate for our members. This gives our members the opportunity to train with new materials and learn new methods of installation before they go out to a jobsite. But, safety has always been our priority! We have almost 70 percent of our members with OSHA 30-hour training, and all our apprentices now finish their five-year apprenticeship with it,” Robert McGuckin, Training Coordinator, says.

Local 17 is seeing its share of applicants looking for good “green jobs.” During the apprenticeships last application period, they had almost 1,000 applicants during the two-week period. Glynn commented, “We have also experienced more college-educated people applying than we have seen in the past.” Proving that jobs in the Mechanical Insulation field are highly sought after, and Local 17’s facility is the program where applicants want to receive that training.

For more information, check out their website at local17insulators.com.

Give Good Athletic Shoes a Run for Their Money

Athletic shoes are marketed to enhance your performance — but are they a gimmick or can they actually help your performance?

Not all athletic shoes are created equally. Choose your shoe according to your activity and your foot. For example, running shoes are great for running, but since they don’t offer much lateral support, they may not be ideal for athletic pursuits that involve a lot of side-to-side movements like tennis. Cross trainers can be a good choice if your routine includes an activity like aerobics, weight training or kickboxing (any exercise on a hard surface that involves side-to-side movement).

If you have low-arched feet (also called “flat” feet), seek out shoes that provide greater heel control and support in the mid-foot region. Individuals with higher arches tend to need shoes with more cushioning for greater shock absorption. Having the right shoes can help prevent pain and reduce the risk of injury. You can also go to some specialty sport stores and have your gait analyzed to help determine the best shoe for you.

Source: Real Simple
“Labor omnia vincit” is the official state motto of Oklahoma, which means “Labor conquers all things.”

Oklahoma is a big state ... unless you travel it with Frank Janowski, who seems to know everyone. Frank is a Senior Marketing Service Representative and labor liaison for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma (BCBSOK). However, asking Frank to talk about himself is a difficult task. He’s “tighter than wallpaper” about his own story, unless you ask him about his relationship with organized labor.

“Never a dull moment, routine, but never the same. Does that make sense? I just try to help people,” Frank said, when asked to describe his usual day. This humility is from a man who has been honored by many labor and community organizations for his service to others.

The state of Oklahoma is known as one of the largest oil producing states with some experts believing Oklahoma may soon pass both Alaska and California in the production of oil. Oklahoma has long been a hub for many aerospace companies, including Boeing, American Airlines, Nordam and previously McDonnell Douglas before it merged with Boeing. Frank worked at McDonnell Douglas for 18 years, serving in the role of bargaining chairman and benefits coordinator for the UAW for 16 years. What does Frank say about being elected four times? “Each time I was re-elected, I looked at myself in the mirror and asked, why?” But people that know Frank, know why. When Frank learns that someone needs help, he will make sure they get it.

A year after the McDonnell Douglas plant closed, Frank was working for a steel company as a regional manager covering the Northeast and Canada. “I learned to hate the cold,” Frank said.

In 1997, Frank joined the marketing team with BCBSOK. Since then, Frank has continued his close relationships with many of the men and women working in the building trades and with the UAW. He attends many union meetings to keep up-to-date with current issues affecting the unions and their health and welfare funds.

Frank has many stories from his years working with the unions in Tulsa. He fondly recalls a retiree meeting he attended for one of his labor groups. An older gentleman, possibly in his 80s, came into the room carrying a large stack of papers asking, “Where’s the Blue Cross guy?” Frank introduced himself and moved their conversation into a smaller room to speak privately. The gentleman said, “I’m going to go broke with all these bills!” Being empathetic, Frank jokingly asked him if he was going to lose the shirt off his back. The retiree put down the stack of papers and began to take off his shirt. “He was evidently confused. He thought that since I was with Blue Cross, I was a doctor and I told him to take off his shirt,” Frank recalled.

The UAW awarded Frank with the Walter P. Reuther Distinguished Service Award in 2005. As president of the UAW, Reuther actively supported the civil rights movement, public housing projects, health care initiatives and environmental causes. The Northeast Oklahoma Labor Council (NEOLC) also honored Frank by presenting him the Eagle Award in 2003 for his dedicated service working with organized labor. He has served two appointments as labor chairman for The Tulsa Area United Way, as well as two terms on the local American Red Cross Board of Directors. He has more than 25 years of experience in the health care industry.

“This relationship has really benefited many in Tulsa and our surrounding communities. Several times, we’ve used union halls for emergency response centers,” Frank said.

In his spare time, Frank also serves as a Board Member with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association National Labor Office, and sits on the Labor Advisory Committee. He is fond of his role developing strategic alliances with health care companies servicing organized labor.

“Since 1979, I’ve been a card-carrying member of the UAW.” Frank’s union membership has been surpassed only by his time earning his “journeyman” status with his wife of 42 years, Stephanie. Stephanie and he have raised their two sons, Braden and Jeremy, in Tulsa and continue to call Tulsa home.

The next time you hear Don Williams sing, “Well, you’ll know I been through it, when I set my watch back to it. Livin’ on Tulsa Time.” We hope you think of Frank.
**This and That**

BCBSIL Labor Account Executive, **Pam Bland** is the newly elected President of the Chicago chapter of the International Society of Certified Employee Benefit Society. Pam welcomes any health and welfare topic ideas for their monthly educational seminars.

Sadly, we say good-bye to a friend of labor – **Judy Barr Tapinka**. Judy always attended the BCBS annual Holiday and St. Patrick’s Day parties. We will miss you, Judy.

International President of the **United Association of Plumbing and Pipfitting Union’s**, **William Hite**, was recently presented with the esteemed George Meany Award at the Boy Scouts of America Council’s (BSA) inaugural Labor and Scout Dinner and Awards Ceremony. The award recognizes union members who have made a significant contribution to local youth through BSA programs.

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**Welcome New BCBSIL Labor Clients**

**Stop Loss**
- East Central Illinois Pipe Trades, effective Jan. 1, 2015
- Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 60, effective Jan. 1, 2015

**Medical**
- Central Illinois Carpenters Health & Welfare Trust Fund, effective Jan. 1, 2015

**Life and AD&D**
- Allied Service Division, effective Jan. 1, 2015

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**Good Health, Good Golf**

One of the best things you can do to improve your golf game in the winter is working on your eye-hand coordination.

Do so by taking your sand iron in your dominant hand at the end of the grip. Put a coin on the face of the club to understand how to start the drill. Move the head of the club up and down as if it were in an elevator shaft. Then try to drop a golf ball on it and learn to balance it while moving the club up and down.

All elite players can do this move. All great amateurs can do it also to help develop better eye-hand coordination. Try this often during the winter, and you will improve your golf game without making a single swing!

*J. Anderson has been a PGA golf professional since 1979 and is TPI Certified. He is an Assistant in the Golf Digest Instructional Schools and can be found in a video blog called “Full Speed Golf” in the Northwest Herald online newspaper.*
“Connect” Your Health

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) announces a new online health and wellness community called Connect. This new site – open to both BCBSIL members and non-members – invites users to get answers, share information and gain knowledge about:

- Health and wellness
- Activities in your community
- Helpful tips to understand your health insurance options
- How to use your health care benefits

Once users register and create an account, they can:

- Like a post and add opinions to conversations.
- Engage with others on topics that interest them.

Go online to connect.bcbsil.com to connect your health today!