



NEWS RELEASE

miamidade.gov



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSIONER JOE A. MARTINEZ DISTRICT 11

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Lorena Guerra-Macias, XXX-XXX-XXXX

Commissioner Joe A. Martinez announces new Miami-Dade Blue health care plan coverage beginning July 1, 2009

More than 600,000 Miami-Dade uninsured residents may be eligible

MIAMI (May 27, 2009) – A unique pilot health care program, co-designed by Blue Cross BlueShield of Florida, Inc. (BCBSF) and the Office of Countywide Healthcare Planning (OCHP) under Commissioner Joe A. Martinez's leadership, will give residents and small business owners the opportunity to purchase health insurance with affordable monthly payments. Coverage will begin July 1, 2009.

Miami-Dade Blue, a low-cost comprehensive health care plan, will allow the county's more than 600,000 uninsured residents struggling with the high cost of medical insurance to have an affordable health plan option. Additionally, small businesses of up to 50 employees are eligible for the plan at a reasonable rate. The Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners originally adopted Commissioner Martinez's resolution for this program last May. The program is the first of its kind in the country, potentially becoming a viable model for other communities and agencies to adopt.

Commissioner Martinez announced the new plan during a press conference on May 26 at County Hall. "Miami-Dade Blue is something I have worked to bring to the community for a long time, and I am pleased to see that this is finally becoming a reality," said the commissioner. "During this difficult economic climate when people are losing their health insurance, Miami-Dade Blue will be a more viable commodity for uninsured residents and improve the quality of life for many in Miami-Dade County."

"Families and small businesses now have access to affordable healthcare," said Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez. "The Miami-Dade Blue plan offers reasonably-priced, quality health insurance for many residents who thought they were priced out of the health insurance market."

The locally-focused program is a PPO plan that makes quality health coverage more affordable because of the select network of providers that have agreed to participate in the program. The individual plans are medically underwritten and, based on age and gender, have costs ranging from \$70 to \$300 per month; small group plans are guaranteed issue. Plans provide a comprehensive range of services, including office visits, surgery, hospitalization, outpatient surgery, pharmacy, and dental coverage.

- more -

Miami-Dade Blue offers access to more than 1,500 physicians and seven hospitals across all areas of the county in addition to a network of clinics, pharmacies and other facilities. Providers will only be available in Miami-Dade County; however, the plan is an added convenience for the many in South Florida who cross county lines between home and work. It is available with a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) or Flexible Spending Account (FSA).

"Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida is very proud to have partnered on this innovative effort aimed at improving health and healthcare access," said BCBSF Market President Penny Shaffer. "Miami-Dade Blue is just one more option in our portfolio of low cost products for those who are uninsured or in danger of becoming uninsured, and we believe this joint effort will make a real and meaningful difference."

Miami-Dade Blue is a no-cost contract with BCBSF for a three-year pilot program.

For more information on Miami-Dade BLUE, please contact 1-800-950-8519 or visit www.bcbsfl.com online.

###