

# PROVIDER QUICK POINTS

## PROVIDER INFORMATION



January 8, 2014

### **Quality Improvement Project for SecureBlue<sup>SM</sup> (HMO SNP) Subscribers: Decreasing High Risk Medication Use**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and Blue Plus (Blue Cross) is committed to the health of our subscribers. Research and clinical consensus have identified certain medications that present an increased risk of harm in older adults due to drug side effects, interactions and toxicity. Avoiding use of these high risk medications (HRMs) is an important and effective strategy for reducing medication-related problems, adverse drug events and poor health outcomes in older adults. Consequently, Blue Cross has implemented several initiatives aimed at decreasing the use of HRMs among our senior population who are age 65 and older.

During the first quarter of 2014, Blue Cross will be sending letters to SecureBlue subscribers who are taking certain medications identified as high risk by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as endorsed by the Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA). The drugs of concern are tertiary tricyclic antidepressants, nonbenzodiazepine hypnotics and skeletal muscle relaxants. The goal of the letter is to educate subscribers about the risks associated with these medications and encourage them to talk with their physician about possible alternative treatment options for their condition. As a result, you may get calls from our subscribers with questions about the high risk medication(s) they take. We recognize that caring for older adults often poses many health care challenges, such as managing multiple chronic conditions and treatment strategies. We thank you for providing the highest quality of care to our subscribers and ask that you carefully consider potential treatment alternatives when caring for patients who are taking a high risk medication. Working together, we can improve health outcomes in older adults by reducing their exposure to high risk medications.

The full list of HRMs is available at:

<http://pqaalliance.org/images/uploads/files/HRM%20Measure%202013website.pdf>