

Rochester, NY Blues raising premiums 12-14%

Insurance Times: October 1, 2002, Vol. XXI No. 20

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) — BlueCross BlueShield expects to raise premiums in its Rochester-area health insurance plans by 12 to 14 percent in 2003, affecting 800,000 people, officials said.

BlueCross BlueShield of the Rochester Area is the region's largest insurer, the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle reported. It would be the fourth consecutive year of double-digit premium rate rises that most businesses say they would pass on somehow to employees, the paper reported. BlueCross insures 75 to 80 percent of Rochester-area residents.

Costs of pharmaceuticals, hospitals and new technology continue to grow, said Jim Redmond, a spokesman for the insurance company.

The predicted rise would mean \$67 to \$79 more monthly for the most commonly held family option. Employers often pay much of the monthly \$560.89 for that plan. p

A Rochester Health Commission survey found most employers expected the increase, and most planned to split the increase with workers, while a third said they might pass on the entire amount. p