

**HEALTH REPUBLIC INSURANCE OF NEW JERSEY (HRINJ) INTRODUCES TOBACCO HARM REDUCTION PROGRAM**

**NEWARK, NJ – (November XX, 2014)** – Health Republic Insurance of New Jersey (HRINJ), a Community Oriented and Operated (CO-OP) Health Plan offering individual and small group coverage throughout New Jersey, is introducing a new program to assist smokers who want to lower their risk of developing disease.

The core component of the HRINJ program is a consultation with a physician about the harmful effects of cigarette smoking and treatments available. This program is free to members and is a reimbursable service for physicians and other health professionals. Medications used for smoking cessation may be used to help reduce the level of smoking, and are also available free-of-charge to members.

“By employing interventions known to be effective in helping people to quit smoking, many smokers can embark on a process to lower their risk, even if they do not quit entirely,” said Dr. Anselm. “In addition, health plans have traditionally limited medications for smoking cessation to two quit attempts per year. HRINJ will lift these limitations and patients may continue to use medications indicated for smoking cessation for as long as necessary.”Despite the availability of effective treatments for smoking cessation, 16.7 percent of New Jersey residents will continue to smoke, according to the latest Surgeon General’s Report. These individuals will suffer significant medical complications, and on average, shorten their lives by about 10 years.

Although many smokers try to quit smoking, it can be very difficult and repeated efforts are required. Those with the least resources and support systems for repeated efforts are more likely to fail, such as those of a lower socioeconomic status, the mentally ill, members of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community, and high school dropouts, according to Dr. Anselm.

“We believe that the introduction of this program will create a new narrative in tobacco control, prompting more patients and doctors to work together to reduce the risk of tobacco related conditions,” says Edward Anselm, M.D., medical director of HRINJ.

For more information regarding health insurance coverages offered for individuals and small groups by Health Republic Insurance of New Jersey, call 888.990.5706, or visit newjersey.healthrepublic.us.

**About Health Republic Insurance of New Jersey**

Based in Newark, NJ, Health Republic Insurance of New Jersey is a non-profit, consumer operated and oriented health plan (CO-OP) that provides cost-effective and comprehensive healthcare coverage to individuals and small employer groups in New Jersey. HRINJ is a mission-and–health-based organization built to serve the best interests of its members. With no private shareholders, profits go towards ensuring individuals and small businesses served get the healthcare they need while providing ample services and reduced premiums.

HRINJ is one of 23 CO-OPs in the U.S. that resulted from the Affordable Care Act when it became law. The company provides a voice for individuals and businesses who want to take part in their health and the healthcare process. The majority of its board of directors will be members of the plan, offering opportunities for input about the best way for HRINJ to deliver healthcare and attain optimal outcomes for members.

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