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**DIABETIC BENEFICIARIES RECEIVE
EXTRA PUSH TO STAY HEALTHY**
*MemberHealth's CCRx Medicare Part D Plan
focused on preventing kidney, cardiovascular damage*

CLEVELAND – For many people with diabetes, kidney damage and cardiovascular complications are devastating side effects of the disease. Fortunately, two classes of medications – ACEI (Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors) or ARB (Angiotensin Receptor Blockers) – have been proven to help reduce the progression of kidney and cardiovascular problems.

To help keep its diabetic beneficiaries healthy, MemberHealth's CCRx Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan recently started working with physicians to ensure they prescribe ACEIs or ARBs for beneficiaries with diabetes. As a result, 68 percent of CCRx's beneficiaries with diabetes are now taking an ACEI or ARB.

Many of the medicines are available in generic forms, and CCRx offers low or no co-pays on generic drugs in all of its plans. So, not only are the medicines beneficial, they are affordable.

“Although adding ACEIs or ARBs to a diabetic's prescription drug regimen increases our costs, the value of this intervention is immeasurable,” said Scott G. Hughes, R. Ph., a clinical pharmacist and vice president for MemberHealth. MemberHealth is a prescription benefits manager and sponsor of CCRx, the fourth largest Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan in the nation.

“As a company, we believe we should work with our beneficiaries and their physicians and pharmacists to advocate for the best and most cost-effective prescription drug regimen for their needs,” Hughes said. “By providing innovative solutions for our diabetic patients, we are successfully helping them achieve a higher standard of care.”

Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure in diabetic patients. Heart disease and stroke account for about 65 percent of deaths in people with diabetes – rates two to four times higher than adults without diabetes. The American Diabetes Association recommends the use of ACEIs or ARBs in patients 55 years old or older, with or without hypertension, but who have another cardiovascular disease risk factor.

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Findings from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey from 1999 to 2002 found that although 100 percent of those surveyed would benefit from this intervention, only 43 percent of those surveyed received this class of medications.

Jill Pupa, executive director of the American Diabetes Association – Cleveland/Northeast Ohio Market, praised MemberHealth’s initiatives. “Complications due to diabetes take a tremendous toll on patients’ quality of life as well as a significant financial cost to the individual and society,” she said. “By taking a pro-active approach and following the ADA’s recommended protocol of prescribing ACEIs or ARBs in older patients, MemberHealth’s beneficiaries will lead healthier, more productive lives.”

Dr. John D Mahan, president, National Kidney Foundation of Ohio Board and professor, Department of Pediatrics, The Ohio State University College of Medicine, said there are clear data supporting the use of these medications to control hypertension in patients with diabetes, thereby decreasing incidence of kidney disease and serious cardiovascular complications.

“Diabetes is the most common cause of kidney failure in the United States. The costs in personal suffering and altered lives, as well as the economic costs, are substantial,” Dr. Mahan said. “As professionals who are confronted daily with the ravages of kidney disease in patients with diabetes, we urge physicians to take all prudent steps to minimize patients’ risk and provide patients with all of the benefits of ACE-I therapy. Diabetic beneficiaries will benefit from the CCRx effort.”

About MemberHealth: MemberHealth, Inc. (MHRx) is a prescription drug benefits manager and a national Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan sponsor, offering Medicare prescription drug plans in 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. MHRx has more than 61,000 pharmacies in its pharmacy network and covers 98 percent of the top 100 medications taken by Medicare beneficiaries.

MHRx established its reputation as a visionary provider of prescription drug benefits for insured and self-insured groups and discount prescription programs across the country, by focusing on strengthening the relationships between patients, their pharmacists and physicians, which ensures that patients can take medicines with confidence and save money.

In 2006, MHRx was ranked #10 on the Inc. 500 list of fastest-growing, privately held companies in the country. MHRx received the Weatherhead 100 Centurion Award in 2006, honoring the fastest-growing Northeast Ohio companies with net sales of more than \$100 million in 2005. For more information, visit www.mhrx.com or www.communitycarerx.com.

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