



NEWS RELEASE

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AnMed Health earns Blue Distinction+ designation for quality and affordable maternity care

(Anderson, S.C. – Feb. 10, 2016)– In an effort to help prospective parents find hospitals that deliver quality, affordable maternity care, BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina and BlueChoice® Health Plan of South Carolina announce the first hospitals in South Carolina to receive the Blue Distinction® Center and Blue Distinction Center+ for Maternity Care designations under the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program.

AnMed Health earned the Blue Distinction+ designation.

Nearly 4 million babies are born in the United States annually, making childbirth the most common cause of hospitalization. In 2014, the latest year for which statistics are available, South Carolina had 57,617 births, of which 10.8 percent were preterm (prior to 37 weeks gestation).

This new maternity care recognition program evaluates hospitals on several quality measures, including the percentage of newborns that fall into the category of early elective delivery, an ongoing concern in the medical community. Compared with babies born 39 weeks or later, early term infants face higher risks of infant death and respiratory ailments, such as respiratory distress syndrome, pneumonia and respiratory failure, among other conditions. These babies also have a higher rate of admission to Neonatal Intensive Care Units.

In addition, hospitals that receive a Blue Distinction Center for Maternity Care designation agreed to meet requirements that align with principles that support evidence-based practices of care, as well as having initiated programs to promote successful breastfeeding, as described in the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative by Baby-Friendly USA or the Mother-Friendly Hospital program by the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) through its “Ten Steps of Mother-Friendly Care.” The

program also evaluates hospitals on overall patient satisfaction, including a willingness to recommend the hospital to others.

Blue Distinction Centers and Blue Distinction Centers+ for Maternity Care, an expansion of the national Blue Distinction® Specialty Care program, are hospitals recognized for delivering quality specialty care safely and effectively, based on objective measures developed with input from the medical community. To receive a Blue Distinction Centers+ for Maternity Care designation, a hospital must meet the same quality criteria as Blue Distinction Centers while also meeting requirements for cost efficiency.

The Blues in South Carolina have designated 14 hospitals as Blue Distinction Centers and 25 as Blue Distinction Centers+ for Maternity Care in South Carolina.

Since 2006, the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality providers for their specialty care needs in cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, knee and hip replacements, spine surgery and others.

“Research shows that compared to other facilities, those designated as Blue Distinction Centers demonstrate better quality and improved outcomes for patients. On average, Blue Distinction Centers+ are also 20 percent more cost-efficient than non-Blue Distinction Center+ designated health care facilities. We congratulate these hospitals for meeting rigorous criteria, and we continue to commit to this and other quality-oriented efforts to help our members better manage their health,” said BlueCross Vice President and Chief Medical Officer Shawn Stinson, M.D.

For more information about the program, please visit www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction.

About BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina

Headquartered in Columbia and operating in South Carolina for nearly 70 years, BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The only South Carolina-owned and operated health insurance carrier, BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina comprises more than 20 companies involved in health insurance services, U.S. DoD health program and Medicare contracts, other insurance and employee benefits services, and a philanthropic foundation that funds programs to improve health care and access to health care for South Carolinians.

About BlueChoiceHealthPlan of South Carolina

Headquartered in Columbia, BlueChoiceHealthPlan of South Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. BlueChoiceHealthPlan has an “Accredited” status from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for its commercial business and for its Medicaid business. BlueChoiceHealthPlan offers four categories of group health plans, as well as individual plans for adults and families, and a South Carolina Medicaid product.

Both companies hold an A+ rating from A.M. Best.

AnMed Health is a 695-bed, not-for-profit health system serving the Upstate and northeast Georgia. The system is anchored by AnMed Health Medical Center, a 461-bed acute care hospital which has earned the prestigious Magnet® designation. The five-hospital system includes AnMed Health Women's and Children's Hospital, AnMed Health Rehabilitation Hospital, Cannon Memorial Hospital in Pickens, S.C., and Elbert Memorial Hospital in Elberton, Ga. With more than 400 physicians and 3,700 employees, AnMed Health is Anderson County's largest employer. Learn more about AnMed Health, an affiliate of Carolinas HealthCare System, at www.AnMedHealth.org.

And then for cancer-related news:

AnMed Health is a charter member of the Levine Cancer Institute. Carolinas HealthCare System established the Levine Cancer Institute in 2010 to more closely integrate and build upon the cancer programs within its network and leverage the resources of a healthcare system with more than 40 hospitals and 900 care locations. Carolinas HealthCare System is one of the nation's leading and most innovative healthcare organizations, providing a full spectrum of healthcare and wellness programs throughout North and South Carolina.

And for heart-related news:

AnMed Health is accredited as a Chest Pain Center with PCI by the Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care.

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