BLOOMFIELD, Conn., December 28, 2009 - As former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, M.D. once said, “Drugs don’t work in patients who don’t take them.” That’s why Cigna is introducing CoachRx, an interactive Web site to help Cigna Home Delivery Pharmacy customers identify their personal barriers to taking their medications, and then providing ways to help people stay on track with the medications they need.

After taking a self-assessment to help individuals determine their own barriers to taking their medications, customers can then sign up for daily reminders through a variety of ways, including cell phone text messages, voicemails or emails. They can also sign up for reminders to take vital signs such as blood pressure or blood sugar levels, or to remember to schedule, or go to, medical appointments.

“We want to reach individuals with information in a way that will do the most good,” said Yi Zheng, PharmD, assistant vice president of pharmacy clinical programs for Cigna. “People’s schedules today are already hectic, which is why we’re trying to help in ways that work best for them.”

For those who may need additional assistance, there’s a toll-free number to call for medication coaching sessions with a clinical pharmacist, who works with health coaches and nurse case managers to help the individual establish health goals. Coaching help includes:

- identifying issues such as medication side effects or what can be expected from a particular medication, including working with the physician to see if another medication might be better;
- reinforcing the importance of not skipping doses or taking only half the medication prescribed;
- helping to understand why it’s important to take needed medications even when someone is not feeling sick;
- explaining information on the medication bottle or benefit coverage; and
- providing information on ways to lower medication costs.

Free pill boxes to help organize medications, educational materials to understand medical conditions, discount coupons to help offset costs, and reminders when it’s time to refill a prescription are included in the program.

“Once people leave the doctor’s office, physicians have limited ways of knowing if their patients fill a prescription or take their medications correctly,” said Zheng. “There are many reasons why individuals may not take their medications. People often don’t like the side-effects, don’t understand why they have to take a medication, or simply forget -- which can hurt their health.”

Zheng points out that medication adherence is a complex and costly issue. According to a report by the New England Healthcare Institute, non-adherence leads to poorer health, more frequent hospitalizations, a higher risk of death and as much as $290 billion annually in increased medical costs.

“We know that staying on track with medications is not always easy,” said Zheng. “That’s when we’re here to help.”

About Cigna:

Cigna (NYSE:CI), a global health service company, is dedicated to helping people improve their health, well-being and sense of security. Cigna Corporation's operating subsidiaries provide an integrated suite of medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy and vision care benefits, as well as group life, accident and disability insurance, to more than 46 million people throughout the United States and around the world. To learn more about Cigna, visit www.cigna.com. To sign up for email alerts or an RSS feed of