

Cigna Joins Leapfrog Group's Call to Action to Help Reduce Early Births

BLOOMFIELD, Conn. - Jan. 26, 2011 - Today The Leapfrog Group launched a Call to Action to reduce the number of **elective early births**. Cigna (NYSE: CI) is joining the effort by distributing information from the March of Dimes about the risks of scheduling deliveries before the **39th week of pregnancy** when there is no sound medical reason, plus information from The Leapfrog Group about the rate of **elective early deliveries** at nearly 800 hospitals nationwide. Cigna will distribute the information to customers through the company's [Healthy Pregnancies, Health Babies](#)® program.

According to The Leapfrog Group, thousands of babies are scheduled for delivery too early each year. When they're born before **39 weeks of gestation**, these babies have a higher likelihood of developing **respiratory distress syndrome** (RDS), being admitted to the **neonatal intensive care unit** (NICU) and being put on a ventilator.

"Children born too early face many health and developmental risks, so we should do everything we can to reduce the number of unnecessary early deliveries," said Dr. Jeff Kang, Cigna's chief medical officer. "We're pleased to join The Leapfrog Group's Call to Action because it draws attention to a very serious problem that can be solved through information and education."

"The last few weeks of pregnancy are critical to a baby's health because important organs, including the brain and lungs, are not completely developed until then. A baby's birth should not be scheduled before 39 weeks of pregnancy, unless the health care provider says it's medically necessary," said Alan R. Fleischman, M.D., March of Dimes medical director and senior vice president. "For many years Cigna has been a true partner with us in the fight against premature births. By joining Leapfrog's Call to Action, Cigna once again is showing its commitment to this important cause."

Cigna has a long history of advocacy for healthy deliveries and early childhood health. In 2011 the company will mark its 17th year as a national sponsor of the March of Dimes' March for Babies. Collectively, Cigna, the Cigna Foundation and the people of Cigna have contributed more than \$25 million to help mothers have healthy, full-term pregnancies and reduce the number of pre-term births. Last year Cigna signed on as an outreach partner of the [text4baby](#) program, a national initiative to deliver vital health information via free text messages to pregnant women and new mothers.

About Cigna

Cigna (NYSE: CI) is a global health service and financial company dedicated to helping people improve their health, well-being and sense of security. Cigna Corporation's operating subsidiaries in the United States provide an integrated suite of health services, such as medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy and vision care benefits, as well as group life, accident and disability insurance. Cigna offers products and services in over 27 countries and jurisdictions and has approximately 60 million customer relationships throughout the world. All products and services are provided exclusively by such operating subsidiaries and not by Cigna Corporation. To learn more about Cigna, visit www.cigna.com. [To sign up for email alerts or an RSS feed of company news, log on to http://www.cigna.com/newsroom/rss](#). Also, follow us on Twitter at [@cigna](#), visit Cigna's YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/cigna> and listen to Cigna's podcast series with healthy tips and information at <http://www.cigna.com/podcasts> or by searching "Cigna" in iTunes.

About The Leapfrog Group

The Leapfrog Group(www.leapfroggroup.org) is a coalition of public and private purchasers of employee health benefits founded a decade ago to work for improvements in health care safety, quality and affordability. Maternal/Child care represents a major component of health benefits programs and Leapfrog's purchaser members share concerns about the quality of obstetrics and neonatal intensive care. Leapfrog therefore asks hospitals to report on two separate maternal/child measures, one focused on normal deliveries and one on high-risk deliveries, to ascertain hospital quality in these areas. Initially organized by the Business Roundtable, it is now an independent, national not-for-profit organization working with a broad range of national purchasers as well as health care and consumer organizations.

###