

Medica Partners in First-Ever Free Mobile Health Service to Provide Health Tips to Pregnant Women, New Moms

MINNETONKA, Minn. - (BUSINESS WIRE) - Recognizing that people are increasingly turning to their cell phones or mobile devices to receive important information, Medica has become an outreach partner with the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB) for [text4baby](#) - a new free mobile information service designed to promote maternal and child health. Medica is the first health plan in Minnesota to partner with HMHB.

Minnesota Health Care Program (MHCP) recipients who receive their coverage through Medica are the primary audience for Medica's text4baby outreach program, although it is available to any member with a mobile device. About one-third of U.S. adults living in or near the poverty line live in a household served by only a wireless telephone, according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. About 20 percent of adults with higher incomes live in households with only wireless telephones. According to a Harris Interactive poll, while 90 percent of Americans have a mobile phone fewer have access to the Internet, and texting is more prevalent among women of childbearing age.

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"Medica is proud to be a part of text4baby," said Glenn Andis, Medica senior vice president for government programs. "Mobile health services have demonstrated the ability to help change patient behavior and improve health outcomes, and we believe that this program can have a significant impact on maternal and child health in Minnesota. It matches well the technology available to Medica's state public programs members, which can be a challenging population to reach."

Text4baby is a free mobile information service designed to promote maternal and child health. An educational program of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, text4baby provides pregnant women and new moms with information to help them care for their health and give their babies the best possible start in life. Women who sign up for the service by texting BABY to 511411 (or BEBE for Spanish) will receive free SMS text messages each week timed to their due date or baby's date of birth. These messages focus on a variety of topics critical to maternal and child health, including birth defects prevention, immunization, nutrition, seasonal flu, mental health, oral health and safe sleep. Text4baby messages also connect women to prenatal and infant care services and other resources.

Medica's Healthy Pregnancy program nurses will educate members who are pregnant or new moms about text4baby and include information in member mailings. Members also may learn about this new service in member newsletters. Additional information is available on Medica's website at www.medica.com/text4baby. Medica also has educated its provider network on the availability of text4baby so that they can encourage their patients to take advantage of the service.

"We believe the power of partnership and community can make an incredible difference in women's and children's lives," said Judy Meehan, executive director of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition. "Text4baby brings our mission to life and with the help of our partners, we believe we can be a strong catalyst for change."

Each year in the U.S., more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely and an estimated 28,000 children die before their first birthday-signifying a public health crisis. The infant mortality rate in the U.S. is one of the highest in the industrialized world, and for the first time since the 1950s, that rate is on the rise.

The text4baby wireless carriers are voluntarily providing the critical communications link of the initiative, distributing text messages to recipients at no charge. Participating carriers include, but are not limited to: Alltel, AT&T, Cellular South, Cellcom, Centennial Cellular, Cincinnati Bell, Metro PCS, N-Telos, Sprint, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, Verizon and Virgin Mobile.

About the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition

The National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition is the only coalition of its kind which acts as a catalyst for change by creating partnerships among community groups, nonprofit organizations, professional associations, businesses and government agencies. The Coalition promotes optimal health for mothers and babies, and works to strengthen families and build healthy communities.

About Medica

Medica is a health insurance company headquartered in Minneapolis and active in the Upper Midwest. With nearly 1.6 million members, the non-profit company provides health care coverage in the employer, individual, Medicaid, Medicare and Medicare Part D markets in Minnesota and a growing number of counties in North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Medica also offers national network coverage to employers who also have employees outside the Medica regional network.

Medica has the highest accreditation status, Excellent, from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for its Minnesota Medicaid HMO plans and commercial health plans in Minnesota and North Dakota. Medica's vision is to become the community's health plan of choice, trusted for its integrity, respected for its service, and admired for its commitment to innovation and efficiency.

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