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**Runaway Specialty Rx Spending**

*A Prescription for Higher Health Care Premiums*

The Conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shields Plans (NYSCOP) today released an infographic titled, “**Runaway Specialty Rx Spending**,” detailing how “specialty” drugs are driving up the cost of prescription medications and ultimately increasing the cost of health insurance.

"Providing quality, affordable health care for our members is something that our plans are always striving for," said Deborah Fasser, spokeswoman for NYSCOP. "Prescription drugs play a critical role in helping to prevent, manage and cure disease. Yet the costs of many of these emerging therapies and specialty drugs, which are used to treat complex, chronic and often costly conditions such as multiple sclerosis and hepatitis C, are rising at an alarming rate."

According to the NYSCOP infographic, in 2012 specialty drugs accounted for approximately 25 percent of total drug spending. By 2020 specialty drugs are expected to exceed 50 percent of total drug spending.

"Specialty drugs, including biologic treatments ranging from allergy tests to vaccines designed to fight cancer, hold tremendous promise and have the capacity to help millions suffering from chronic diseases," said Fasser. "Consumers must be aware, however, of the costs associated with these medications and who pays for them."

Nationally, for every insured person \$240 of your annual health insurance premium is applied toward paying for specialty drugs, irrespective of the person's health or need. For a family of four, this means approximately \$960 of their annual premium is goes toward paying for these drugs, despite the fact that no one in the family needs or utilizes these therapies.

For more information, please visit NYSCOP at: [www.nysblues.org](http://www.nysblues.org).

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*The New York State Conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans (NYSCOP) is a partnership of Rochester-based Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield and New York City-based Empire Blue Cross Blue*

*Shield. Together, the two health insurance plans provide comprehensive health coverage for millions of New Yorkers and are dedicated to educating the public through in-depth research and analysis of the cost, access and quality of health care.*

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