Bupa / Blue Cross Blue Shield Partnership Creates Giant Global HC Provider Network

Bupa, a leading provider of international private medical insurance (IPMI), has announced a strategic global partnership with the Blue Cross Blue Shield system (BCBS), to create the largest global healthcare provider network, including 11,500 hospitals and 750,000 medical professionals in 190 countries.

BCBS is the largest US-based health insurance group, comprising a federation of 37 Blue Cross Blue Shield companies, which combine to form the largest provider network in the US (over 96 per cent of US hospitals). The partnership will combine BCBS's US network, their existing international network (accessed through their IPMI product, GeoBlue), and Bupa's non-US international hospital network.

Bupa and BCBS will also develop new international health insurance products, which will be available to customers and employers worldwide for coverage in 2015.

The announcement follows Bupa's purchase of a 49 per cent stake in Highway to Health, Inc (HTH) in December 2013. A HTH subsidiary sells and administers GeoBlue, the BCBS international health insurance product. A group of BCBS companies own the remaining 51 per cent of HTH.

Robert Lang, Managing Director of the Bupa Global Market Unit, said: "I'm delighted Bupa has joined forces with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield organisations – this is the biggest partnership the international health insurance market has ever seen. We're creating the biggest global provider network for people who require international health coverage, and we'll develop new products utilising the leading capabilities from our organisations."

Scott Serota, CEO of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA), said: "Blue Cross Blue Shield and Bupa are two of the most respected names in health care and we will work together to offer the best solution for individuals and organisations by providing access to healthcare around the world. Travellers around the world can now benefit from the security and stability that Blue Cross and Blue Shield members have long relied on."

Angelo Masciantonio, co-founder and CEO of HTH, said: "It's tremendous to have two global healthcare industry leaders invest in us to develop and grow GeoBlue. Combining HTH's leading technologies with the strong Blue Cross Blue Shield and Bupa brands and the breadth of their provider networks creates a compelling, extremely competitive offering in the global international health insurance marketplace."

Source: Bupa http://www.bupa.com

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