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N.J. initiative aims to streamline paperwork

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America's Health Insurance Plans, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and five New Jersey insurers said roughly 95% of the state's private insurance claims can soon be handled through a single Web portal under an effort to lower healthcare overhead costs. Five New Jersey physicians groups have endorsed the effort, AHIP President and CEO Karen Ignagni told reporters during a conference call.

The insurers include Aetna, AmeriHealth New Jersey, Cigna Corp., UnitedHealthcare and Horizon Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Jersey, which will begin handling questions of eligibility and benefits through the Web portal no later than April, said Christy Bell, president and CEO of Horizon Healthcare—the state's Blues managed-care plan—and senior vice president of healthcare management.

Ignagni said use of one Web portal is designed to give providers immediate and easy access to information on insurance benefits and claims, regardless of patients' insurance plan, and reduce time and resources for hospital and clinic administration. Providers will evaluate the Web portal under a one-year test of the initiative, which is similar to one AHIP launched in Ohio last October.

Roughly three-quarters of New Jersey providers use the initiative's Web portal, said Bradley Waugh, president and CEO of NaviNet, an online healthcare communications company selected through a request for proposals.

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