

# *Physicians Advocacy Institute, Inc.*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

September 8, 2008

Physicians Advocacy Institute, Inc. (“PAI”) President Robert W. Seligson, Executive Vice President/CEO of the North Carolina Medical Society today announced that the facilitator under the Compliance Dispute Program established by the class action settlement between the nation’s physicians and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association has been appointed. In making the announcement, Seligson said that “the Compliance Dispute Program assures physicians and patients that the settling Blues Plans will keep their commitments to make their business operations transparent and fair, allowing physicians to focus on patient care without the burden of bureaucratic hassles.”

The Settlement Agreement resulted from a class action lawsuit brought by several state and county medical associations against the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association alleging that the Blues Plans conspired to use unfair payment practices to defraud physicians out of legitimate payments owed for patient care. The settlement required the Blues Plans to make their business operations more transparent by, among other things, requiring them to use a clinically based definition of medical necessity, generally recognize CPT® coding rules, and to provide at least 90 days notice of policy changes.

The Compliance Dispute Program empowers physicians to enforce the Settlement by allowing them to file complaints, free of charge, when a settling Blues Plan has not made the business changes required by the Settlement. Seligson said that “in previous settlements physicians have received millions of dollars through the compliance process. We expect the Blue Cross Blue Shield Compliance Program to likewise help physicians make sure the Blues Plans are adhering to the terms of the settlements.”

Deborah J. Winegard has been appointed Class Compliance Dispute Facilitator. Ms. Winegard currently serves as Of Counsel to the California Medical Association and has served as Compliance Dispute Facilitator for the Aetna and CIGNA settlements. Physicians who believe they have a compliance dispute against a Blues Plan (or against Anthem/Wellpoint, HealthNet or Humana) should go to [www.hmosettlements.com](http://www.hmosettlements.com) for more information.

PAI was established to help enforce the managed care settlements and to create programs designed to level the playing field between physicians and health insurers. Its Board is comprised of the CEO’s of several of the state medical associations instrumental in bringing and resolving the lawsuits against the nation’s largest for-profit health insurance companies.

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