



**NEWS FROM THE AMA**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 14, 2007

**Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield latest Health Insurer to Sign  
“Quality First” Agreement**

*Remarks delivered today at a press conference hosted by New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo to announce an agreement with Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield*

Statement attributable to:

Nancy H. Nielsen, M.D., Ph.D.  
AMA President-elect

“On behalf of the American Medical Association, I would like to commend New York Attorney General Cuomo for the unprecedented speed with which he has been able to extend his initial groundbreaking agreement with CIGNA to Aetna and now Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield to protect patients and physicians throughout New York and, indeed, the country.”

“Physicians greatly appreciate your leadership in demanding the accuracy and oversight necessary to protect patients and physicians from the flawed rankings that have resulted from systems using an insufficient number of patient cases, questionable quality measures and poor adjustments for risk. This agreement establishes the safeguards necessary to protect patients and physicians from inaccurate ratings which unjustifiably undermine the physician-patient relationship.”

“These commitments to renounce physician rankings based solely on economic factors, implement safeguards which reduce the risk of error, and acknowledge that physician ratings should not be the sole basis for selecting a physician go a long way toward changing the outlook for patients and physicians across the country.”

“Patients should always be able to trust that the information they receive on physicians is valid and reliable, but the integrity of this information can be undermined by a health insurer’s corporate profit motive. This conflict of interest can erode confidence and trust in physicians and disrupt patients’ longstanding relationships with physicians who know them and have cared for them for years.”

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“Given this conflict of interest and the potential for irreparable damage to the patient-physician relationship, the AMA commends Attorney General Cuomo for his leadership in addressing the complex and evolving challenges of physician performance measurement and establishing fundamental protections from the risks inherent in physician evaluation programs run by health insurers.

“As a New Yorker, I am proud to be here again with the New York Attorney General’s office. I thank him on behalf of the nation’s physicians for his efforts to protect the patient-physician relationship, and look forward to working closely with his office to ensure that these vital agreements are successfully implemented.”

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