

BCBS in Ohio ends controversial experiment

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Anthem Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Ohio has reportedly ended an experiment in which some physicians were paid less for patients needing more attention.

Anthem, a subsidiary of Indianapolis-based health care benefits company WellPoint Inc., initiated the experiment last fall in Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio,

Under the procedure, Anthem reimbursed physicians in southwest Ohio by a single rate for what had been two varying classifications of patients.

Under the original system, doctors were paid more for additional time needed for some patients, The Indianapolis Star reported Tuesday. But Anthem reduced the number of pay levels from five to four, paying physicians less for some types of patients and a little more for others.

Opponents of the program, such as the American Medical Association, said the procedure provided an economic disincentive for doctors to provide the more comprehensive care required by some patients.

After months of negotiations, Anthem announced it would end the controversial practice Sept. 1.

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