

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **TOP TENNESSEE EMPLOYERS WARNED TO AVOID BCBST POLICY *Implementing Policy Changes During COVID-19 Harms Patients & Employers***

[Schaumburg, IL] [June 18, 2020] –Continuing with its campaign to alert of dangerous changes to BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee (BCBST) prescription policies, the [Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations](#) (CSRO) today alerted leaders of many of the largest employers in Tennessee. In addition to [communications sent previously to the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce](#) and [leaders of BCBST](#), physician and patient advocates are warning the business community of a looming threat to the Tennessee workforce and the state economy.

The BCBST policy (scheduled to begin on July 1) forces patients to utilize its preferred specialty pharmacies for infusion therapies making it nearly impossible for treatments to be conducted in physician offices – under their care.

“A letter sent to Tennessee employers, some of which are likely BCBST customers, states in part:

We hope that you will alert your human resources and benefits administrators to the dangers associated with the BCBST plan. I urge you (and your benefits team) to familiarize yourself with the facts – as BCBST has been less than accurate in their defense of its dangerous policies. It has even blamed you, its customers, as a reason for its implementation – stating that its customers have demanded the cost savings measures.

Negative impacts on your employees will be much worse (and expensive) than any savings promised by BCBST.

“Employers in Tennessee are already hurting from the impacts of COVID-19,” explained Dr. Madeline Feldman, CSRO President. High risk COVID-19 patients who are chronically ill run the risk of losing access to treatments at their doctor’s office if the BCBST policy is implemented.

Tennessee leaders receiving the letters include:

- Fred Smith - FedEx Corporation
- Todd Vasos - Dollar General
- Mark Sutton - International Paper
- William Rhodes - AutoZone
- Sandra Cochran - Cracker Barrel
- Hal Lawton - Tractor Supply Company
- Mimi Vaughn – Genesco
- John Cowles - TruGreen

“As physicians on the front lines of medical care we will always fight for our patients – just as we hope these business leaders fight for their employees,” Dr. Feldman continued.

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*The CSRO is comprised of professional rheumatology societies formed to advocate for excellence in rheumatologic disease care and ensuring access to the highest quality care*