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**CMS HEALTH PILOT SEES 100,000<sup>TH</sup> WELLNESS SCREENING AS PROVIDERS EXPAND PROGRAM REACH**

SPRINGFIELD -- The Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) announced the year-long pilot health-screening partnership between the State of Illinois and a key state health insurance provider reached a significant milestone – its 100,000<sup>th</sup> free screening to identify a variety of vital signs and possible symptoms. State officials believe the pilot program is already influencing better health decisions among state workers.

The pilot program between CMS and Aetna began in May 2018 to provide more than two dozen self-use, health-monitoring machines in State facilities across Illinois. The health stations gave workers and clients using those facilities an easy way to monitor their personal vital signs and follow up with medical action as needed. The smart health stations, named *higi*, allow workers to privately, conveniently and regularly check the kinds of vital signs doctors use to monitor patient health, such as weight, body mass index (BMI), pulse, and blood pressure. Early anecdotal information from users shows that monitoring for blood pressure and pulse have been among the most frequent indicators prompting people to seek health assistance, at a time when treatment often amounts to prescribing proper medications before problems become severe or lead to other damaging health results.

Illinois is the first state to offer this innovative aid to wellness and is seeking to quickly expand its reach.

“Reaching this milestone means CMS and Aetna have provided 100,000 opportunities and counting for employees to better understand and improve their health and wellbeing,” said Janel L. Forde, Acting Director of CMS. “We’re proud to deliver an innovative health and wellness engagement platform that gives every employee access to convenient tools to help them live better lives.”

The screenings have already surpassed expectations on usage, and CMS officials believe the outcomes have led to better personal health decisions.

“CMS is excited to partner with AETNA and *higi* to provide access to on-site innovative health screenings,” said Teresa Flesch, Deputy Director for the CMS Bureau of Benefits, which oversees insurance offerings for some 440,000 covered lives, along with the *higi* health program. “The usage and outcomes have far exceeded our expectations. We’re proud to help our employees to more effectively manage their health.”

Aetna joined the partnership to help encourage earlier diagnosis and treatment when symptoms or vital numbers indicate action is warranted.

“Aetna and the State of Illinois have a 35-year relationship that has seen healthcare evolve with a focus on better health,” said Frank D’Antonio, Local Market President at Aetna. “The Aetna team identified a wellness solution that allowed us to meet the State of Illinois employees where they are, at their workplace, to help them on their healthcare journey.” The Aetna partnership with Illinois is the first of its kind in the nation and is expected to be offered by Aetna in other states based on the early success of the Illinois pilot, he added.

CMS intends to deploy at least 100 health stations across state facilities by June 2020 and make them available to help more employees routinely take part in monitoring, protecting and improving their health. Aetna estimates that adequate early treatment for high blood pressure can save an individual thousands of dollars in health care costs, while avoidance of more serious consequences like stroke or heart disease, can save lives and much higher costs over the long term.

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