

CareFirst, WellDoc Communications to team on diabetes study

By Sue Schultz

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CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, the state's largest health insurer, will sponsor a study of technology management systems and their effectiveness monitoring diabetes patients.

The Owings Mills-based insurer will team up with WellDoc Communications Inc., a Baltimore high-tech health care company that helps diabetes patients manage the disease through Internet and cell phone messages. The study at University of Maryland School of Medicine will track 260 patients with diabetes for a year.

Patients can use their cell phone or a Web site to send the company health information, including their blood sugar levels and diet. A virtual Internet "coach" or the patient's physician can send messages back about how to improve their health condition.

CareFirst officials said the study will look at how the technology helps patients' health and if it helps reduce costs associated with managing diabetes.