Eduardo J. Sanchez, M.D., has been named vice president and chief medical officer for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. The former commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) and the Texas Department of Health (TDH), Sanchez most recently served as the director of the Institute for Health Policy, School of Public Health, at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Sanchez succeeds Paul Handel, M.D., who has been promoted to Chief Medical Officer of Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC), the health benefits company that operates through its Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in Texas, Illinois, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

In his new role, Dr. Sanchez will oversee the Texas Division’s medical policy and strategy as well as the company’s new initiative to improve member wellness and public health.

Sanchez served from 2004 to 2006 as TDSHS commissioner, where he oversaw operations of the 11,500-employee state agency responsible for public health, mental health and substance abuse, including Texas’ health and medical responses to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

As TDH commissioner from 2001 to 2004, Sanchez oversaw the development of the TDH bioterrorism preparedness operations following 9/11 and the anthrax scare, directed the agency’s efforts to heighten awareness about overweight and obesity issues in Texas, and led the formation of the TDSHS from four agencies.
Dr. Sanchez, who has been a member of BCBSTX’s Affiliate Board and the Caring for Children Foundation of Texas Board, has received honors from many health-related organizations, including the Texas Health Institute, American Heart Association and American Academy of Family Physicians. Currently, he is chair of the National Commission on Prevention Priorities, chair of the Advisory Committee to the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and a member of numerous professional associations.

Dr. Sanchez received his medical degree from UT Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. He also holds a master’s degree in public health from The University of Texas Health Science Center and a master’s in biomedical engineering from Duke University.

“We are pleased Dr. Sanchez has joined our management team,” says BCBSTX President Darren Rodgers. “He will play a key part in helping us fulfill our mission of improving the health and well-being of our members and of communities across the state.”