

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Joins Nationwide Commitment to Improve Access To and Quality of Substance Abuse Treatment Adopts 8 Principles of Care

BOSTON, Nov. 8, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- As part of its ongoing commitment to addressing the epidemic of substance use disorder (SUD) including the opioid crisis, which killed an estimated 2107 Massachusetts residents in 2016,¹ Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) has joined 11 other health care plans pledging to adopt eight "National Principles of Care" for the treatment of substance use disorder. These Principles are expected to improve outcomes and save lives.

The Principles of Care were derived from the [Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health](#) and are backed by three decades of research. Aligning care with these evidence-based Principles will significantly improve the quality of treatment for the 21 million Americans with substance use disorders. The Principles include:



- Universal screening for substance use disorders across medical care settings
- Personalized diagnosis, assessment, and treatment planning
- Rapid access to appropriate substance use disorder care
- Engagement in continuing long-term outpatient care with monitoring and adjustments to treatment
- Concurrent, coordinated care for physical and mental illness
- Access to fully trained and accredited behavioral health professionals
- Access to FDA-approved medications
- Access to non-medical recovery support services

Complete details on these Principles are available [here](#).

"The numbers are significant and troubling - more than 21 million Americans suffer from substance use disorder, yet only 11 percent receive treatment," said Bruce Nash, MD, chief physician executive at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "Here in Massachusetts, one in ten of our neighbors struggle with alcohol or drug dependency. We are proud to join this national movement to improve both access and care. The Principles are yet another step Blue Cross is taking to ensure our members get the quality care they need when they need it."

Blue Cross is already recognized as a leader in addressing substance use disorder. Its [Prescription Pain Medication Safety Program](#) became a model for the state and nation in combating the opioid epidemic by reducing the number of opioid-based medications available for misuse. The health plan's in-house behavioral health care managers have developed unique relationships with in-patient treatment facilities that allow for immediate outreach to admitted members and allowing for better coordinated treatment and care placement. Blue Cross is also a proud founding member of [RIZE Massachusetts](#), a state-wide, private sector initiative focused on bringing real and lasting change to those struggling with substance use disorders.

The National Principles of Care initiative is part of Blue Cross' work as a member of the Substance Use Disorder Treatment Task Force, launched in April 2017 by Gary Mendell, founder and CEO of [Shatterproof](#), and Dr. Thomas McLellan, founder and chairman of the Treatment Research Institute and former Deputy Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Metrics will be established to measure progress on this initiative and will be shared regularly.

For more info about the Task Force, please visit: <https://www.shatterproof.org/substance-use-disorder-treatment-task-force>.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We're the trusted health plan for more than 25,000 Massachusetts employers and are committed to working with others in a spirit of shared responsibility to make quality health care affordable. Consistent with our corporate promise to always put our 2.8 million members first, we're rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

About Shatterproof

[Shatterproof](#) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to ending the devastation the disease of addiction causes families. Shatterproof works to end the stigma and foster a community of support, providing evidence-based resources to support prevention, treatment, and recovery. Shatterproof advocates for changes in federal and state policy and supports the development and implementation of evidence-based solutions for substance use disorders.

¹ Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health - <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/08/31/data-brief-overdose-deaths-aug-2017.pdf>

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