Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts President and CEO Andrew Dreyfus calls for a community approach to achieve goal of quality affordable health care

BOSTON — September 21, 2012 — Andrew Dreyfus, President and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, outlined a four-point plan to build an exceptional and affordable health care system as Massachusetts begins to implement cost containment legislation. Watch the video.

"Our elected officials have given us a mandate; now it is up to us," Dreyfus told business leaders at a forum at the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. "This issue itself isn't new—we have talked about health cost containment for years. But by codifying a measurable goal, our lawmakers have moved us from aspiration to action."

Dreyfus compared the cost challenge ahead to running the Boston Marathon. "We are already at about mile 22—Cleveland Circle—on coverage, and mile 15 on quality—crossing Wellesley at Route 16, but have those steep Newton hills still ahead of us. When it comes to cost though, we're barely to Framingham and have a long, challenging race ahead of us."

Dreyfus cautioned that Massachusetts is still far from the ambitious goal established in the new law to bring health spending down to the level of the state's total economic growth. "To complete this marathon, we must start by acknowledging that the cost problem is more difficult to solve than coverage or quality, and that all of us—health plans, consumers, physicians, nurses, employers, labor, and government—will need to work harder, faster, and smarter."

Dreyfus called for the following actions to achieve greater value in the health care system:

- Hasten the redesign of our system for delivering care and paying for it.
- Promote better health so we spend less time and money treating illness.
- Empower patients to play a central role in their care.
- Acknowledge and move past some historic divides that subvert our affordability efforts.

Dreyfus acknowledged the collective efforts the health care community has recently made in addressing costs, "Increases in premiums for individuals and small businesses are a fraction of what they were just two years ago and underlying medical trend has dropped from 10-11% down to 6-8%. But we should take little solace in these improvements. Costs are still too high for the employers, families and government agencies paying the bills, crowding out other public and private priorities."

"To achieve affordability, we must move beyond divides that prevent us from working together to achieve common goals. For example we must jointly recognize that regulation and competition can be mutually reinforcing, that the business and clinical sides of health care can support one another, and that collective stewardship of our health care system can improve, rather than undermine, individual access and treatment," said Dreyfus.

"If we can unite these opposing ideas, we have a unique opportunity to create a health care system in the Commonwealth where patients have a strong voice, clinicians are trusted advisors and practitioners, and government oversight and private payment support better care, as defined by the health of the community."

The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce is a broad-based association representing 1,500 businesses of all sizes from virtually every industry and profession in our region. The Chamber works to help Greater Boston-area businesses grow and succeed through its strategic networking events, impactful business advocacy and innovative leadership development initiatives. For more information, visit bostonchamber.com.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (www.bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. Celebrating our 75th anniversary in 2012, we 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 members first, we are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality.

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