Associate Volunteers Showcase Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts' Commitment to the Community

BOSTON — May 7, 2014 —Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) recently honored four of its associates and one of its community partners at its annual Excellence in Service Awards Reception. The program celebrates employees from across the company who go above and beyond to serve their community. As part of the company's Corporate Citizenship program, associates are encouraged and supported in their efforts to volunteer in the community.

"It is important for us to invest ourselves, our time, our energy and our vision, into both our company as well as our community," said Jeff Bellows, Vice President of Corporate Citizenship at BCBSMA. "We place a high value on our social and environmental responsibilities. This awards program is a way for us to show that community service isn't separate from our business success — it's an integral part of it."

BCBSMA's encourages volunteer time for all employees, allowing paid time off during work hours as part of a coordinated effort. "We know that happy and fulfilled employees lead to productive employees," added Bellows. "Volunteering is one component of a broader Corporate Citizenship strategy that also includes focused community investments, coordinated employee giving and environmental sustainability work."

This year's award winners include:

Community Partner of the Year – Playworks

This award is designed to recognize a nonprofit organization that is partnering with BCBSMA to engage its associates in transformational volunteer service and whose mission aligns with the company's commitment to helping children and families who face economic hardship.

Playworks, a national organization, believes in the power of play to bring out the best in every young person. This school year they are â€˜bringing out the best' in 15,000 students in 33 low-income schools across Boston and Lawrence. For the past three years, BCBSMA has supported Playworks programming at the Dever McCormack School in Dorchester, ensuring Boston's most vulnerable young people experience a fun, safe and engaging school day. Over the last year, BCBSMA volunteers joined Playworks in making recess an important part of the school day at the Dever and beautified the school's playground. Playworks also took part in last year's BCBSMA Skills-Based Volunteer Program. This year, BCBSMA is furthering its partnership by integrating Playworks activities into its wellness strategy to make sure BCBSMA is a healthy and active workplace.

William C. Van Faasen Community Service Sabbatical Program – Jessica Eves

In 2006, the BCBSMA board of directors created a sabbatical program to honor the company's former CEO, Bill Van Faasen. Through this program, the company offers a full-time sabbatical leave to one associate each year to work with a nonprofit organization for a three- to six-month period.

This year's participant, Jessica Eves, is a Medford resident and has worked for BCBSMA for the last four years in its Business Consulting Group. Jessica recently completed her fellowship with the Codman Square Health Center and Codman Academy Charter Public School in Dorchester. Codman Academy and Codman Square Health Center designed a unique learning model that integrates health care and education as a vehicle to create healthy communities and combat poverty. Jess not only helped the two organizations document this ground-breaking partnership, but she also designed a blueprint for health and education partnerships. Organizations across the country can leverage this blueprint to develop similar models to prevent poverty and strengthen community health.

Distinguished Leadership Award – Lynn Bowman

Established in 2010, this award is presented to an outstanding BCBSMA leader who has championed volunteerism internally and fostered the civic engagement of his or her teams and colleagues.

This year's recipient, Lynn Bowman, is BCBSMA's Vice President of Member and Provider Service (MAPS) and a Norwell resident. Last year, Lynn made it her mission to ensure that all of the MAPS team members were able to participate in the company's volunteer program. She launched an innovative staffing model to ensure the team members would have the opportunity to step away from the phones and their day-to-day operations. She also challenged her colleagues to think about how to focus their volunteer efforts to make a sustained and tangible impact on the life of an organization.

Sustainability Award – Dan Comella

This award acknowledges an associate whose efforts have contributed to a more environmentally sustainable company or community.

Dan Comella of Warwick, RI is this year's recipient. Dan, who works in Information Technology/Operations, embodies what it means to be a green associate by seeing both the operational and environmental opportunities in his day-to-day role at the

company. With the help of Dan's leadership, ingenuity and persistence, BCBSMA has made great strides in reducing its office paper, saving both money and trees. Dan is a key contributor to the company's Sustainability Council on a range of opportunities, and has been recognized for his new ideas and forward-thinking.

Excellence in Service Award – Deirdre Wigmore

Each year, BCBSMA selects an associate who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to community service and has made a sustained and tangible impact on an organization.

This year's winner is Deirdre Wigmore, a Hingham resident who works in Health and Medical Management. Deirdre volunteered more than 1,000 hours of her own time last year – or 20 hours per week – in support of the Cohasset American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. With the philosophy of "Service, not Self," members of the American Legion and the Auxiliary have joined together to promote volunteerism and giving to others. Deirdre and fellow members of the Legion and the Auxiliary have conceived and implemented hundreds of programs for veterans, their families, young people and the community at large.

In 2013 BCBSMA associates contributed more than 28,000 volunteer service hours valued at $1.2 million, and the company donated $6 million in grants and sponsorships to more than 535 nonprofit organizations that address the health and wellbeing of children and families facing economic hardship. To learn more about BCBSMA's Corporate Citizenship efforts, view the annual Corporate Citizenship Report.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (www.bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are the trusted health plan for more than 31,500 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 are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

For further information: CONTACT: Kathleen Makela (617) 246-7725 kathleen.makela@bcbsma.com

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