Doctors prescribe healthy food, exercise, and outdoor activity

Blue Cross convenes local nonprofits to create prescription program for healthy living

BOSTON, Dec. 4, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Today, Blue Cross Blue Shield ofMassachusetts announced the launch of its new social impact initiative, "Dot Rx," a prescription program designed in collaboration with Codman Square Health Center and five local nonprofits that leverages the resources and expertise of each organization to educate, empower, and provide opportunities to Dorchester families to improve their health.

Through the Dot Rx program, doctors at Codman Square Health Center refer families to meet with peer coaches trained by Union Capital Boston. Coaches meet one on one with families to discuss their health challenges and to set goals around eating, exercise, and engaging with the outdoors. Based on the families' unique goals, the coach connects them with free or reduced rate opportunities and resources available through Daily Table, the Dorchester YMCA, Healthworks Community Fitness and Outdoors Rx, a program of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and provides consistent check-ins to offer support and monitor progress.

"Most people we serve feel motivated to live healthier but they just don't know how or where to start," said Sandra Cotterell, CEO of Codman Square Health Center. "This collaboration means our patients at risk for high blood pressure, diabetes or other chronic conditions will receive coaching and encouragement to help them engage in the right programs for their needs right here in their neighborhood."

Individual nonprofits have tested prescription programs before, but Dot Rx is the first program engaging a health plan, multiple nonprofits, and a community health center – all working together to provide families with holistic programming aimed at improving the health of Dorchester community members.

"This program takes a unique approach to addressing deep, longstanding health problems that face our communities," said Andrew Dreyfus, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts President and CEO. "We're pleased that this diverse group of partners has joined with us to engage families in creating goals and supporting them in making healthy lifestyle choices every day."

In addition to guiding the development of the Dot Rx program model, Blue Cross has committed $1 million over two years in financial grants and pro-bono consulting from Blue Cross employees to lead the systems development, financial modeling, and program evaluation.

After an intensive, eight-month planning effort, providers at Codman Square Health Center began writing Dot Rx prescriptions in October. To date, 72 families have been referred to peer coaches. During the first six months, the program aims to engage 100 families in programming while tracking participants' behavior changes. The long term goal is to scale the program and expand healthy living prescription models statewide.

Healthy Living Accelerator

The Dot Rx collaborative is the signature program of Blue Cross Blue Shield ofMassachusetts' Healthy Living Accelerator. Developed to support new ideas and expand proven solutions to advance healthy living innovation, the Healthy Living Accelerator is a four-part approach that includes the following initiatives:

- Healthy Living Collaborative: Partnership with select groups of nonprofit organizations to design, test, and accelerate sustainable and replicable models to advance healthy living.
- Healthy Living Network: Access to grants, workshops, and best practice sharing opportunities for a select group of

nonprofit organizations delivering healthy living experiences.
- Healthy Living in Action: Support of community events, sponsorships, and employee volunteer projects that offer Massachusetts residents a wide-range of healthy living experiences.
- Healthy Living Convenings: Bringing together leaders from health care, business, government, and community organizations to learn and share insights about how to accelerate healthy living innovation.

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 2.9 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.

Codman Square Health Center
Codman Square Health Center was founded in 1979 by a group of community visionaries seeking to restore their neighborhood on the brink of disaster. Today, with a staff of over 300 employees and an astounding depth and breadth of community programs and partnerships, the Health Center serves as a resource for improving the physical, mental and social well-being of the community. Serving over 22,000 patients each year, our comprehensive, integrated services build upon a Patient-Centered Medical Home model and include primary care, urgent care, dental care, eye care, behavioral health, and nutrition. For more information, visit www.codman.org.

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