Blue Cross Blue Shield Of Massachusetts Wins Prestigious Award For Response To Opioid Crisis

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association award recognizes innovations that provide measurable impact to consumers and customers

BOSTON, April 4, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts announced today the not-for-profit has received a Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Brand Excellence Award for its ongoing work to combat the opioid epidemic, one of the nation's most significant public health challenges.

Blue Cross was recognized for its creation of groundbreaking programs that expand access to care for people with opioid use disorder, engage employers in the prevention of overdoses, and provide education and other resources that support people with the disorder through treatment and recovery while reducing the stigma associated with opioid use.

"We are honored to receive a brand innovation award from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association for our work related to the opioid crisis," said Andrew Dreyfus, president and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield ofMassachusetts. "While we can be proud of the results we've achieved, we as a community must continue to collaborate to develop additional innovations that prevent opioid use disorder and create more effective interventions that ensure people receive the treatment they need and support for their successful recovery."

From 2016 through 2018 Blue Cross launched new initiatives that:

- Improved access to medication assisted treatment and psychotherapy - the most effective treatment protocol - by eliminating copays and deductibles for methadone (where permissible by law); removing prior authorization requirements for prescriptions of 16mg or less of Suboxone; removing the copay for Narcan for many members; and reducing the administrative burden on psychotherapists who treat our HMO members.
- Created a first-of-its-kind opioid overdose response toolkit to offer potentially life-saving Narcan and overdose response training in workplaces throughout Massachusetts.
- Launched an opioid resource center—a comprehensive website with resources for anyone affected by the opioid crisis.

Blue Cross continues to explore innovations in treatment and recovery, announcing in 2019 a grant program to fund the growth of recovery coach programs.

The company began its important work on the opioid epidemic in 2012 with the launch of aPrescription Pain Medication Safety Program, which focused on the safe and clinically appropriate prescribing of opioid based-medications. The number of filled opioid prescriptions fell by 40 percent over four years after the program's launch.

Blue Cross also is a co-founder ofRIZE Massachusetts and supports Drug Story Theater. Both are non-profits focused on preventing opioid use disorder and reducing stigma.

"Nearly 106 million Americans trust the Blue Cross and Blue Shield brand with providing reliable, high-quality health care coverage to themselves and their families," said Scott P. Serota, BCBSA president and CEO. "We are proud to recognize Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and all of the BCBS companies that have exceeded member expectations and delivered exceptional service to the communities they serve."

This marks the 24th year that Blue Cross Blue Shield Association has presented Brand Excellence Awards to recognize Blue Cross Blue Shield companies nationwide in categories that promote the brand, including attracting new customers, fostering loyalty among existing customers and brand innovation.

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 are committed to the relentless pursuit of quality, affordable health care with an unparalleled consumer experience. Consistent with our promise to always put our 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.

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