Blue Cross Blue Shield Of Massachusetts Commits $2M To COVID-19 Community Relief

Company reallocates funds to expedite critical support to nonprofits across Massachusetts

BOSTON, April 6, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ("Blue Cross") announced today its latest relief efforts to support nonprofits affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to its $250,000 contribution to support COVID-19 relief efforts across Massachusetts, the company will reallocate more than $1.75 million in community investments and strategic sponsorships to expedite unrestricted cash to help nonprofits meet operational challenges.

"We're committed to doing everything we can to help our nonprofit partners during these trying times," said Jeff Bellows, vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs at Blue Cross. "That includes honoring our sponsorships for events that may have been cancelled, enabling our community partners to use funds to address their greatest needs and reallocating dollars we had earmarked for strategic initiatives to provide relief grants to organizations that are helping people stay healthy during this public health emergency."

As part of its $2 million commitment, Blue Cross is implementing the following support:

- Committing $550,000 in relief grants to nonprofits providing frontline aid including access to food, basic needs and critical support for first responders, health care and retail workers. The funds, which were previously reserved for Blue Cross' Healthy Living Accelerator Grants, will be distributed in two phases: $275,000 will be distributed this spring in $10,000 - $15,000 grants to 22 nonprofits and the other half, later this fall, when organizations have reassessed their greatest needs.
- Lifting funding restrictions on $520,000 of committed funds to ensure nonprofits have the flexibility to address critical challenges. Examples include shifting the company's Project Bread funding to support its Covid-19 program that ensures students across the Commonwealth still have access to breakfast and lunch during school closures; and working with the City of Worcester's Division of Youth Opportunities to launch Rec Woo Online, a program that provides youth enrichment and fitness classes through online platforms.
- Leveraging a $300,000 commitment to Blue Cross' Healthy Living Collaborative partners, including Codman Square Health Center and East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, to meet pressing community health challenges.
- Contributing $250,000 to support COVID-19 relief efforts across Massachusetts, including:
    - $100,000 | Boston Resiliency Fund
    - $25,000 | *The COVID-19 Response Fund* for the Pioneer Valley @ The Community Foundation of Western Mass
    - $10,000 | *Neighbor-to-Neighbor Fund* @ Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
    - $50,000 | *COVID-19 Fund* @ United Way of Mass Bay & Merrimack Valley
    - $50,000 | *COVID-19 Response Fund* @ Greater Worcester Community Foundation
    - $15,000 | *Southcoast Emergency Response Fund* @ The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Instituting a matching gift program for all employee donations to any Massachusetts nonprofit. Total is currently at $100,000 and the program will remain open through May 13.
- Contributing more than $70,000 to the United Way of Mass Bay & Merrimack Valley's COVID-19 Fund in recognition of employees' volunteer efforts and commitment. Due to community volunteer events being postponed, Blue Cross

reallocated costs to make a $50 gift in honor of each of the 1,500 employees who participated in a company-planned volunteer event over the past year.

- Contributing more than $50,000 to a select group of organizations with whom Blue Cross had to cancel volunteer projects and whose missions are critical during this time, including The Greater Boston Food Bank, Cradles to Crayons, Weymouth Food Pantry, Father Bill's & MainSpring, Interfaith Social Services, Pine Street Inn, St. Francis House, West End House, 2Life Communities, Magical Moon, Playworks, Daily Table and Message of Hope.
- Launching several virtual volunteer initiatives including remote skills-based volunteering, college mentoring with Strive for College, warm wish notes with Cradles to Crayons, virtual storytelling with Message of Hope, sewing facemasks for local health care workers and donating blood through the Red Cross.
- Partnering with MassINC to launch a three-week tracking poll measuringMassachusetts residents' levels of understanding and compliance with public health measures.

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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