Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Offers Dental Members Access to Teledentistry During COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduces new partnership with Toothpic and new access to select Philips Sonicare products

BOSTON, July 28, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) has introduced several innovative programs to support Dental Blue members' oral health care needs, as Massachusetts dental practices begin to reopen after a temporary closure for non-emergency services during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Dental Blue members now have access to:

- Three months of free use of the Toothpic teledentistry app
- Special access to select Philips Sonicare oral health products for use at home
- In-person preventive services such as cleanings and exams twice in a calendar year instead of once every six months

In late March, Blue Cross began covering dental consultations via phone or video with in-network providers for dental members with non-emergency dental concerns to ensure members had access to necessary care during the pandemic.

"We know oral health is an important component of overall health and is especially important for the management of chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease," said Blue Cross Executive Director of Professional Services Dr. Bob Lewando, a periodontist. "Since many of our dental members have not been able to access dental care in person during much of the COVID-19 crisis, we designed a suite of programs and benefits to ensure they can still get the oral health care they need during this time of social distancing."

Toothpic's online teledentistry platform provides members with a convenient way to get clinical recommendations from a licensed dentist. After registering and downloading the Toothpic app, members are asked to provide a written description of their dental issue along with photos of the problem area. Members will receive a personalized report with treatment options and estimated costs, in as little as six hours. In-person services, such as cleanings and exams, are not supported by the Toothpic platform.

"We're proud to support the innovative Blue Cross efforts to provide convenient access to dental care," said Toothpic CEO Mark Moore. "The Toothpic platform facilitates clinical guidance by licensed dentists to members in just a few hours when they cannot or prefer not to attend a physical dental office. Blue Cross and Toothpic share a belief that maintaining good oral health supports positive overall health, and this initiative will further reduce barriers to necessary care at a critical time for those who need it."

In partnership with Philips Sonicare, Blue Cross is offering Dental Blue members special access to select oral care products, including power toothbrushes, replacement brush heads and subscription packages. Philips Sonicare power toothbrushes are designed to decrease plaque and gingivitis more effectively than manual toothbrushes in everyday use.

"Philips Sonicare offers a range of clinically proven products that help people feel confident they are taking the best care of their oral health in between dental visits," said Marci El-Deiry, senior marketing director of Philips Oral Healthcare. "Preventing dental issues starts at home. We are incredibly excited to partner with Blue Cross on this initiative – together, we are ensuring that members have the tools they need to maintain a healthy routine."

Blue Cross is also offering more flexibility for preventive services, allowing dental members to receive routine cleanings, periodic exams and fluoride treatments twice in a calendar year instead of once every six months.

"We hope this change will enable members to use all their preventive benefits when their dental practice reopens," Blue Cross Vice President of Specialty Benefits Rich Greenhalgh said. "However, members who have non-emergency dental concerns can have a phone or video visit with their dentist at any time, and it will be covered the same way as an in-person visit."

Blue Cross' Dental Blue plan is the fastest-growing dental plan in the state, approaching 1 million members, the majority of whom also have BCBSMA medical coverage.

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. We offer additional benefits including dental, vision, life and disability through our Specialty Benefits area, which includes Indigo Insurance Services and Blue Benefit Administrators, our third-party medical claims administrator.

About Toothpic
Toothpic is a leading dental technology company on a mission to improve the oral health of 1 billion people globally by 2030. Toothpic partners with ambitious organizations including health plans, dental providers and oral care companies to expand access to care, increase quality and improve oral health outcomes for individuals. Since 2012, when Toothpic created the consumer teledentistry category, the company has leveraged the power of technologies such as smartphone imagery, artificial intelligence and data-driven insights to complement its deep clinical expertise and rapidly growing teledentistry network of over 1,600 providers. Today, Toothpic is made available to millions of individuals through our partners. These partners are the largest and most progressive oral health companies globally, helping define and build a future of dental care that is integrated, accessible and designed to achieve improved outcomes and higher-quality care at a lower cost for all. More information about Toothpic can be found at www.toothpic.com/oralhealthma.

About Royal Philips
Royal Philips is a leading health technology company focused on improving people's health and enabling better outcomes across the health continuum from healthy living and prevention, to diagnosis, treatment and home care. Philips leverages advanced technology and deep clinical and consumer insights to deliver integrated solutions. Headquartered in the Netherlands, the company is a leader in diagnostic imaging, image-guided therapy, patient monitoring and health informatics, as well as in consumer health and home care. Philips generated 2019 sales of EUR 19.5 billion and employs approximately 81,000 employees with sales and services in more than 100 countries. News about Philips can be found at www.philips.com/newscenter.

SOURCE Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

For further information: Amy McHugh, amy.mchugh@bcbsma.com