Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Joins National Effort to Help Vaccinate Seniors in Underserved Communities

Joins Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies across the country with goal of vaccinating 2 million seniors

BOSTON, March 4, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ("Blue Cross") today announced it will join Blue Cross companies across the country, along with members of America's Health Insurance Plans, in helping to vaccinate 2 million seniors living in the most vulnerable communities. The Vaccine Community Connectors pilot initiative will focus initially on those 65 and over and will expand as vaccine supply grows and becomes more widely available. The joint initiative was highlighted during a White House COVID-19 Taskforce briefing on Wednesday.



"This is an extension of our commitment to doing everything we can to help end this pandemic," said Andrew Dreyfus, Blue Cross' president and CEO. "We want to increase vaccination rates among our members as quickly and equitably as possible to help achieve herd immunity."

"Improving health equity means setting important goals, removing barriers to better care, and meeting people where they are," said Tonya Adams, national spokesperson for the Vaccine Community Connectors program and chief customer experience officer at Regence BlueCross BlueShield. "This is a seminal moment in America. We look forward to working with all partners across the public and private sectors to provide millions of seniors with an equal opportunity for protection from this virus."

Identifying vulnerable communities

As part of the Vaccine Community Connectors pilot initiative, Blue Cross and other participating health plans will focus on their respective members and the communities they serve, identifying members who are vulnerable to COVID-19 and who live in areas where vaccination rates are most inequitable.

Blue Cross will use its member data and advanced analytics and rely on a number of methods to help identify the most vulnerable communities and members. Socioeconomic data will be paired with other information such as vaccination histories and the prevalence of chronic conditions to improve accuracy and efficiency in identifying those most at risk.

As vaccine supplies expand and appointments are made available, Blue Cross will contact members who are eligible to get a vaccine through multiple channels to alert them of their eligibility, answer questions about registration and scheduling options, help address any barriers, send reminders when and if a second shot is required, and track progress to ensure that vaccines are getting to those who need them most. Blue Cross will also continue to work with community partners to educate members on the safety, efficacy, and value of COVID-19 vaccines.

Vaccine transportation initiative

Today's news follows Blue Cross' announcement in February that it will contribute $1 million to fund tens of thousands of free rides to and from COVID-19 vaccination sites across the state to support community health centers, underserved communities, and vulnerable populations. The program will launch this month in coordination with the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, which will assist in identifying participating community health centers.

Blue Cross and its Foundation have invested approximately $12 million in the community via financial contributions, pro bono, and in-kind contributions during the COVID-19 crisis. For more information on how Blue Cross is supporting its members during the COVID-19 public health emergency, visit the company's Coronavirus Resource Center.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (www.bluecrossma.org) 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.BlueLinks for Employers

SOURCE Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

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