Blue Cross Blue Shield Of Massachusetts Launches 'Timeout For Mental Health' Campaign

Mental health tips featured during on-air & streaming coverage of select Boston Red Sox games on NESN
Part of company's broader efforts in recognition of National Mental Health Awareness Month

BOSTON, May 25, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ("Blue Cross") recently launched a new initiative aimed at supporting mental well-being as a part of the company's efforts to highlight National Mental Health Awareness Month and support community mental health this month and beyond. The 'Timeout for Mental Health' campaign offers mental health tips to viewers during select Red Sox games airing on New England Sports Network (NESN). The campaign launched earlier this month and will run through July 30.



Throughout game broadcasts, Blue Cross' mental health quick tips appear as animated banners on the screen. The practical tips offer advice for improving mental well-being, including practicing intentional breathing exercises, taking the time to connect with a friend and more. **During the 7th inning stretch, game hosts discuss the role stretching can play in improving moods and reducing stress.** Blue Cross' mental health campaign is also integrated into gameplay, with hosts taking advantage of passive time like timeouts to encourage viewers to take their own timeout for mental health each day.

"At Blue Cross, we believe that mental health is just as important as physical health, and as the need for mental health support continues to grow, it's crucial to find ways to raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with it," said Kathy Klingler, chief consumer experience and marketing officer at Blue Cross. "Opportunities like this allow us to meet people where they are, and in coordination with other efforts like expanded access to care, help address a critical need at an all-important time."

Additional mental health resources for members and customers

Blue Cross is deeply committed to supporting the mental health of its members, customers, employees and the community year-round, and is highlighting several specific initiatives in May in recognition of National Mental Health Awareness month. These include:

Events

- Deploying in-house clinical experts to offer mental health advice via webinars. Dr. Ken Duckworth, senior medical director for behavioral health at Blue Cross, participated in the *Boston Business Journal*'s webinar about managing mental health at work and led a Blue Cross webinar on how to support the mental health of caregivers. Both videos are available for replay on the Blue Cross YouTube channel.
- Supporting the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walks Your Way event as a sponsor. Funds raised will ensure that local NAMI programs continue to benefit Massachusetts communities.
- Hosting a family-friendly Inspirational Speaker Series. This month's session will take place on May 26 and will feature Tom Smith, the first person in medical history to be paralyzed three separate times and recover. Smith will discuss, in part, the role mental health has played during his injuries and recoveries.

Other mental health resources

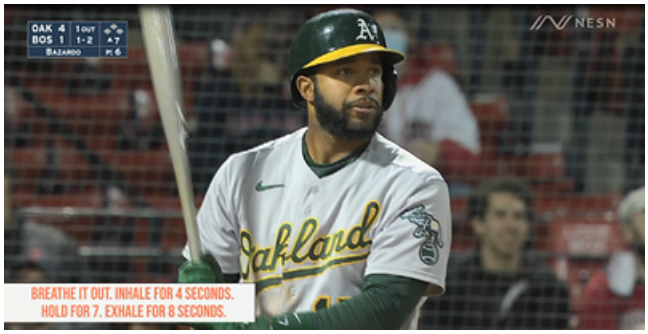
- Updating the company's robust Mental Health Resource Center, designed to help members better understand their mental health care options, find clinicians, and explore self-guided tools for managing stress, anxiety, depression and insomnia.
- Continuing to produce original content for *Coverage*, Blue Cross' award-winning news service, with advice on a range of mental health topics including how to support kids as they return to in-person learning and tips for older adults seeking mental health support.
- Promoting exclusive member discounts on classes that support mindfulness and wellness, including yoga and meditation

Supporting Blue Cross employees' mental health

To support its employees' mental health, Blue Cross has rebranded and expanded its paid sick time with "wellness days." Employees are encouraged to take wellness days not just for illness but also to recharge and support their own emotional health when needed.

Blue Cross members who need assistance finding mental health and/or substance use support options can visit the company's mental health resource center or call the dedicated mental health line at 1.888.389.7764. Blue Cross representatives can help guide members to the right support for them and, in some cases, help locate appropriate clinicians who are accepting new patients and even assist with setting up the first visit.

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, equitable 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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For further information: Amy McHugh, amy.mchugh@bcbsma.com, 617 246 2311

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