Blue Cross Blue Shield Of Massachusetts Recognizes Juneteenth As A Company Holiday

Company's community meals initiative donates 1,000 meals inspired by the day's history

BOSTON, June 14, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ("Blue Cross") will for the first time recognize Juneteenth as an official paid company holiday, closing its offices on Friday, June 18th in observance of the June 19th holiday. Juneteenth, also known as Emancipation Day, celebrates the emancipation of the last enslaved people after the Civil War.

"Making Juneteenth a company holiday is part of our continued commitment to celebrating diversity and fostering inclusion," said Stephanie Browne, vice president of talent acquisition and chief diversity and inclusion officer at Blue Cross. "We're offering education and reflection time for our employees to underscore our company's commitment to working toward racial equity and justice."

In addition to paid time off, Blue Cross is offering employees a chance to learn and serve in celebration of Juneteenth with several different events, including a dialogue on the history of Juneteenth featuring L'Merchie Frazier, director of education and interpretation for the Museums of African American History in Boston and Nantucket, and a virtual volunteer event with Art for Social Equity benefitting National CARES, a nonprofit that serves youth of color through mentorship.

Blue Cross is also highlighting Juneteenth as part of its community meals initiative. The program, which launched in spring 2020 to help address the rising rate of food insecurity amid the COVID-19 pandemic, will feature a special barbecue meal influenced by the cuisine of southeast Texas where Juneteenth originated, and a card detailing the meal's inspiration from Chef Jaryn LaPlante. One thousand barbecue meals will be delivered to community partners at Interfaith Social Services and the Weymouth Food Pantry. Since the start of 2021, the organizations have received 21,000 meals from Blue Cross.

"Offering a special menu through our meal donation program allows us to not only recognize Juneteenth but also continue to meet a critical need in our community," said Jeff Bellows, vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs at Blue Cross. "We proud to continue working alongside our community partners to address food insecurity while honoring the history of the day."

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 and 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.

SOURCE Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

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