Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Commits $16M to Promote Health Justice Across the Commonwealth

BOSTON, Nov. 9, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) today announced its commitment to promoting health justice and eliminating the physical and social barriers that lead to health inequities. Over the next five years, the company will provide $10.6 million in direct financial contributions and $5.5 million in pro bono and in-kind support to not-for-profits working to address food, environmental and racial justice in Massachusetts communities.

The health justice strategy is part of Blue Cross' corporate citizenship efforts and strengthened commitmentannounced earlier this year to be a leader in addressing health inequities across the Commonwealth. The company's corporate citizenship mission is to help all Massachusetts residents lead healthy lives and ensure a healthier, more equitable and just community that promotes good health.

"The pandemic has deepened our understanding of the systemic inequities that have devastating consequences on health outcomes," said Blue Cross president and CEO Andrew Dreyfus. "Together, with our community partners and civic leaders, we strive to create an environment that makes good health attainable for everyone."

The company's health justice strategy focuses onthree interconnected priority areas – food, environmental, and racial justice. To create positive, sustainable change that is community-driven, Blue Cross will provide funding, volunteer support, innovation, and technical expertise and will serve as a community convener to support not-for-profit partners' efforts to:

- **Food Justice -** Ensure access to healthy, culturally relevant food and build a sustainable food system
- **Environmental Justice -** Overcome the disproportionate impact of pollution and environmental degradation on under-resourced communities; provide equitable access to green spaces and environments that promote physical activity
- **Racial Justice -** Drive toward dismantling the historical and present-day injustices that contribute to disparate health outcomes, and strive to eliminate systemic, interpersonal, and institutional racism across Massachusetts

"In the wake of the pandemic and the long overdue reckoning on racial injustice, it was clear we needed to do more to address the social and environmental factors affecting the health of communities of color," said Jeff Bellows, Blue Cross' vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs. "We're investing our resources and talent to help our not-for-profit partners create more equitable, just, and healthy communities."

Health justice is an evolution from the company's prior community strategy that focused on promoting healthy living. In 2020, Blue Cross and its Foundation contributed $22.6 million in financial, pro bono and in-kind support toMassachusetts-based not-for-profit organizations, including $12.9 million for COVID-19 relief efforts.

To learn more about Blue Cross' commitment to the community, health justice strategy, and funding and volunteer partnership opportunities, view its Corporate Citizenship website.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (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.

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