

BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL JOINS BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS' GROUNDBREAKING PAYMENT PROGRAM FOCUSED ON IMPROVING HEALTH EQUITY

Nation's first pediatric medical center signs value-based contract focused on eliminating disparities in care

BOSTON, April 30, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts](#) ("Blue Cross") today announced that [Boston Children's Hospital](#) is now part of the health plan's pay-for-equity [financial payment model](#). Blue Cross is the first health plan in Massachusetts — and among the nation's first — to introduce these contracts, which link financial incentives to achieving measurable improvements in health equity.

Boston Children's, the first children's hospital in the nation to participate in this type of contract, joins five of the state's leading health systems that have signed the agreements: [Tufts Medicine](#), [Steward Healthcare Network](#), [Beth Israel Lahey Health](#), [Mass General Brigham](#) and [Boston Accountable Care Organization Inc.](#), which is part of [Boston Medical Center](#).

With the addition of Boston Children's, 56% of Blue Cross' Massachusetts members now receive care from clinicians taking part in equity-focused value-based agreements.



"Our kids are literally our future and yet we know that racial and ethnic inequities in health care jeopardize that future in so many ways," said Sarah Iselin, Blue Cross' president and CEO. "We are so fortunate to be working with the experts at Boston Children's who understand how to close those gaps and address the challenges unique to kids and families with the goal of ensuring that everyone has access to the care and support they need and deserve."

Boston Children's has one of the country's largest pediatric primary care physician organizations, with more than 500 physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and integrated behavioral health providers. Through its work with Blue Cross, Boston Children's will focus initially on reducing inequities in child and adolescent well-care visits.

"Health equity for all families is at the forefront of our goals here at Boston Children's, so this was a natural move for us," said Kevin B. Churchwell, MD, president and CEO of Boston Children's Hospital. "This partnership with Blue Cross marks a significant milestone in eliminating inequities in healthcare, and we look forward to continuing our work together in this space."

"We're working collaboratively with provider organizations to advance and improve health equity," said Dr. Mark Friedberg, senior vice president of performance measurement & improvement at Blue Cross. "Engaging another large Massachusetts health system—especially one focused on children's care—is an important step toward making measurable improvements in health care equity."

Blue Cross' commitment to health equity

As part of its [commitment to addressing health inequities](#), Blue Cross gathers and publishes data each year for more than 1.2 million of its commercial Massachusetts members. This data has revealed racial and ethnic inequities in many areas of patient care. In partnership with the clinicians in its network, the health plan uses this data to make meaningful changes and work toward eliminating racial disparities in the care Blue Cross members receive.

As part of that work, [Blue Cross funded \\$25 million in Institute for Healthcare Improvement grants](#) to support physician practices and hospitals with Alternative Quality Contracts in their efforts to eliminate racial and ethnic inequities in care and share learning across institutions.

A recent qualitative [study](#) found that clinicians in Blue Cross' Equity Action Community — which provides opportunities for learning, collaboration, and financial support for health care organizations in Blue Cross' value-based network — are developing new ways to address inequities in care for diabetes, heart disease, and other conditions.

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 showing up for everyone like they're the only one and guiding our members to the exceptional health care they deserve — affordably, equitably, and seamlessly. In keeping with our commitment, 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

For further information: Kelsey Pearce, kelsey.pearse@bcbsma.com
