# BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS CONTINUES TO EXPAND ACCESS TO WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES AND FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

*State's leading health plan launches new doula pilot to improve maternal care and eliminate health inequities*

BOSTON, Nov. 13, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ("Blue Cross") is building on its commitment to women's health, today announcing new services and care options to ensure women and families have access to the resources and support they need.

"Our aspiration is to be the best plan for women's health in the country, and that means thinking holistically about what women and families want and need," said Sarah Iselin, Blue Cross' president and CEO. "I am thrilled with our continued progress to offer the kinds of supports and services we know will make a real difference – from caregiving support to menopause treatments and more."

**NEW DOULA PROGRAM**

Blue Cross recently launched a pilot program with Accompany Doula Care to help address racial inequities and improve maternity and birthing care across Massachusetts by pairing eligible members with a birth doula. Doula care and support can significantly reduce cesarean and premature deliveries and improve health outcomes.

According to Blue Cross' latest Health Equity Report, Black women are disproportionately affected by severe maternal morbidity, having a higher percentage of childbirths with potentially life-threatening complications compared to other populations.

As part of the pilot, racially and ethnically diverse pregnant members in the state will receive doula services from Accompany Doula Care, including prenatal visits with ongoing messaging and education, in-person support during birth and postpartum visits. As the current pilot advances, Blue Cross will gather feedback and data to assess the outcome of the program.

"We are proud and excited to be working with Blue Cross, as our goals align in reaching families who may have less access to doula services but stand to benefit from them the most," said Adwapa Asenso, interim executive director at Accompany Doula Care. "By providing culturally sensitive, continuous support throughout pregnancy and postpartum, we aim to empower families, improve birth outcomes, and co-build a path forward to increase access and deliver quality care to underserved communities."

**MENOPAUSE SUPPORT AND MORE**

Maven Clinic's Menopause & Midlife Health program is now available at no cost to Blue Cross fully-insured 51+ accounts and available as a buy-up for self-insured accounts. Earlier this year, Blue Cross announced that it is working with Maven to offer a variety of programs to support our employer customers throughout their reproductive health journey.

"Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is a true champion of innovation in the health care system. As early digital health adopters, they have long recognized the power of technology to meet women and families where they are," said Dr. Neel Shah, chief medical officer of Maven Clinic. "We are thrilled to extend our work with them to include menopause and midlife health—ensuring that members can find care on the same platform throughout their entire reproductive lifecycle."

**NEW CAREGIVING SUPPORT OPTION**

More than 60% of women act as caregivers to an adult or child with disabilities, and the demand for caregiving support continues to rise.

Blue Cross is working with Cleo to offer a family care platform that supports parents and caregivers across all life stages. Available as a buy-up for certain employer customers starting January 1, 2025, Cleo makes caring for loved ones – from infants to older adults – easier through one-on-one personalized guidance, expert support and resources.

"Without dedicated caregiver support, many detrimental health issues can arise, including chronic stress, depression, anxiety, and isolation," said Madhavi Vemireddy, MD, CEO of Cleo. "We're thrilled to be working with Blue Cross to provide parenting, eldercare, and sandwich generation support to drive positive health outcomes so that women and their families can focus on the joys of caregiving."

**WORKPLACE INITIATIVES**
In addition to declaring Blue Cross a menopause-friendly workplace, we've taken significant steps to further support our employees' health and well-being. Recent women's health initiatives include:

- Launching an internal support group, "Beyond the Pause," led by our in-house OB-GYN and nurse practitioner, to share resources and encourage open dialogue on menopause.
- Hosting in-person and virtual sessions for employees with our Reproductive Health Care Team, along with Maven Clinic, to discuss menopause support and care options and answer questions.
- In honor of Menopause Awareness Month, we recently hosted an in-person walk and celebration at our Hingham office for all employees.
- Our employees also now have access to Maven Clinic's programs, including support for adoption, surrogacy, IUI, IVF, male fertility, egg and sperm freezing, pregnancy, postpartum support, return to work, coaching for parents of children ages 1-18, perimenopause, menopause, postmenopause, and men's midlife support.

"We want our members to feel supported and cared for during every stage of their health journey, from adolescence through maternity, postpartum and menopause," said Dr. Monica Ruehli, Blue Cross' clinical director of reproductive health and gender affirming services. "We're proud of the work we're doing to support both our employees and our members, and these new initiatives are just more ways we can help meet the needs of women and families."

**BLUE CROSS' ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OPTIONS**
Blue Cross' specialized Reproductive Health Care team gives Blue Cross members access to personalized support options and resources for a variety of women's health issues, including supporting diverse families embarking on their parenthood journey.

Additional reproductive health and women's health services and resources include reimbursement for childbirth classes, breast pump savings, lactation counseling and more. Members can visit MyBlue to learn more about what is available to them.

**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.

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