

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan reflects on 75 years by focusing on the future

Written by Australian Business

DETROIT, March 7, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan reaches a milestone on March 8, celebrating its 75th year as a nonprofit health insurer.

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"Our company is 75, but we're not acting our age by any means," said Daniel J. Loepp, president and CEO of BCBSM. "We're a modern, dynamic company prepared to serve and guide our stakeholders as health care transforms under the Affordable Care Act. Our stakeholders benefit from Blue Cross' experience and strong Michigan roots – given our deep relationships with doctors and hospitals across the state, and our history of engagement within Michigan's diverse communities."

BCBSM began when Michigan hospitals formed Blue Cross and a group of doctors affiliated with the Michigan State Medical Society started Blue Shield. The two entities joined together in the 1970s. Today, BCBSM and its HMO subsidiary, Blue Care Network, provide health coverage to 4.45 million members in Michigan and hundreds of thousands who work for Michigan companies but reside in other states.

Since 1980, the company has served as Michigan's "insurer of last resort," a safety-net role defined by BCBSM's unique approach to providing health coverage to all Michigan residents regardless of pre-existing health condition, and guaranteeing the renewability of that coverage. The company transitioned to become a nonprofit mutual insurance company on Dec. 31, 2013. As part of that transition, BCBSM will contribute \$1.56 billion over 18 years, beginning in 2014, to the independent Michigan Health Endowment to sustain the company's nonprofit social mission.

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"Our character as a nonprofit organization remains our guiding force, despite the changes that have taken place over our history and our growth as a business," Loepp said. "Blue Cross strives to keep our margins very low on health insurance, maximize revenue from subsidiary companies and investments to take pressure off health insurance premiums, and contribute in substantial ways to the public good in Michigan."

Today, BCBSM is a \$21.3 billion enterprise – including Detroit-based BCBSM, Southfield-based BCN, Lansing-based workers' compensation firm Accident Fund Holdings, and Brighton-based long-term care insurer LifeSecure. BCBSM is a minority owner of AmeriHealth Caritas, a Pennsylvania-based Medicaid managed care company; and it is an investor in Bloom Health, a Minnesota-based developer of private exchange solutions for employers.

"We aren't leveraging this 75th anniversary year to look back. Instead, we are primed and ready to talk about the potential of the next 75 years," Loepp said. "Our foundation is strong, built over seven decades through significant contributions to Michigan. Blue Cross is ready to build on that foundation, and committed to lead Michigan to a healthier future."

- **Statewide Access to Health Care** – BCBSM has long been the only insurance company committed to providing health care access to people living in each of Michigan's 83 counties. That commitment continues, as BCBSM is the only insurer offering ACA-compliant coverage on the Health Insurance Marketplace to people living everywhere in Michigan

- **Improvements to Health Care Quality** – Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's tradition of working with doctors and hospitals continues through its Value Partnerships initiatives – a collection of patient safety, clinical quality and care process efforts that are transforming Michigan's health care system and reducing costs. BCBSM has constructed the largest Patient-Centered Medical Home program in the nation. The company is at the forefront of changing how hospitals are paid to place more focus on quality patient outcomes. More information is at www.valuepartnerships.com and <http://www.mibluesperspectives.com/health-care-value/>

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- **Protecting the Vulnerable** – Since 2005, BCBSM's [Strengthening the Safety Net](#) program has provided nearly \$8 million in grants to free and low-cost clinics across the state to provide health care access to the uninsured population. Last year, BCBSM made an unprecedented commitment to provide \$1.56 billion over 18 years to the Michigan Health Endowment.

- **Investing in Children's Health** – BCBSM's [Building Healthy Communities](#) program has invested more than \$6 million in locally-based efforts to engage kids in eating healthier and becoming more physically active.

- **Reinvigorating Michigan's Core Cities** – Since 2004, BCBSM has made a determined effort to invest in Michigan's core cities. It has restored historic downtown buildings in Grand Rapids and Lansing and located hundreds of employees at those facilities. In 2011, the Blues relocated 3,400 suburban-based workers to downtown Detroit to create a unified campus of more than 6,000 employees.

- **Improving the Customer Experience** – BCBSM is at the beginning stages of a company-wide focus on making health insurance easier for people to understand, and improving its service to members. This year, [Forrester Research named BCBSM as making the biggest improvement in customer experience](#) among all companies it measures in every industry in the nation.

"The 75th anniversary of BCBSM is a major milestone for our company," said Loepp. "Much has changed throughout the years, but our commitment to Michigan stays the same. We're proud of what we have accomplished and excited to celebrate this momentous step into the future as a mutual nonprofit insurer."

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, a nonprofit mutual insurance company, is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. BCBSM provides and administers health benefits to more than 4.4 million members residing in Michigan in addition to employees of Michigan-headquartered companies who reside outside the state. For more company information, visit bcbsm.com and MiBluesPerspectives.com

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