



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION  
AWARDS \$1.12 MILLION TO ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING CARE TO  
THE UNINSURED**

*Groups impact Berkshire County, Brookline, Boston, Fall River, Holyoke,  
Huntington, Lowell, New Bedford, Springfield, Worcester, Worthington*

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BOSTON — The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation has awarded \$1.12 million in grants to 17 health care delivery organizations working to implement health care for the uninsured. The grants range from \$50,000 to \$75,000.

“Despite the tremendous progress made in Massachusetts to expand health insurance coverage to most residents, some of our most vulnerable populations still do not have basic coverage,” said Sarah Iselin, President of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. “Our grantees are finding innovative ways to help those who are homeless, living with mental illness, actively abusing alcohol or drugs, or dealing with other issues that prevent them from obtaining health insurance or accessing care. By funding them, we are furthering the mission of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, which is to expand health care access for all residents of the Commonwealth.”

The grants were made in the *Innovation Fund for the Uninsured* grant program area, which was established by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation in 2001. The funding is intended to improve the organization, continuity, and completeness of care for the uninsured. The rate of uninsurance in Massachusetts is at an historic low — the state recently estimated that more than 97 percent of state residents are insured. But the needs of those who still don't have insurance are more acute than ever and the *Innovation Fund for the Uninsured* program area is intended to help health delivery organizations meet those needs.

The following organizations have been awarded grants in the *Innovation Fund for the Uninsured* grant program area:

**Behavioral Health Networks (Springfield)** was awarded \$75,000 to implement a Jail Diversion Program to connect the mental health and court systems through a case management system for the mentally ill, developmentally disabled, and/or substance abusing individuals who have committed a minor crime. The program will establish a case manager who will coordinate mental health and substance abuse treatment services with primary care and social supports, which the courts can use as an alternative to jail, when appropriate. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$225,000.

**Boston Health Care for the Homeless** was awarded \$65,000 to implement a program integrating the primary care and behavioral health care services offered to Greater Boston's homeless population. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$195,000.

**Brookline Community Mental Health Center** was awarded \$70,000 to implement a Mental Health Home for approximately 1,000 individuals and families in Brookline and Newton dealing with chronic mental illness who are homeless, at risk for eviction, or recently unemployed and unable to pay their bills. The program will help integrate the primary health care needs of clients with their mental health care needs. The health center will collaborate with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Brigham and Women's Primary Care Associates, and Children's Hospital Boston. This grant is the first of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$210,000.

**Dimock Community Health Center (Boston)** was awarded \$65,000 to implement a Diabetes Health Life Initiative that will provide patient navigator

services to Black and Latino diabetic patients. The program will allow Dimock to more fully integrate its diabetes-related services so that more patients have access to all services. The grant will also be used to support efforts focused on uninsured individuals. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$195,000.

**Family Health Center of Worcester** was awarded \$75,000 to convert its urgent-care center, which currently serves nearly 3,000 uninsured patients, into a walk-in primary care and social services clinic. The transition will help uninsured patients connect with a primary care provider and assist with other services that will help the uninsured view the Family Health Center as a medical home. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$225,000.

**Great Brook Valley Health Center (Worcester)** was awarded \$72,500 to fund a specialized, bilingual, bicultural social services case manager to assist patients on the Health Safety Net and those transitioning off of Refugee Medical Assistance. The case manager will work with patients of the health center who have complex barriers to care and unusually dire needs. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$217,500.

**Greater New Bedford Community Health Center** was awarded \$65,000 to revamp its chronic disease management and care coordination systems. The new system will network primary care providers so they can more easily use evidence-based strategies in patient care with support from dedicated case management workers. The target population for this initiative includes uninsured patients with diabetes, hypertension, and asthma. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$195,000.

**HealthFirst Family Care Center (Fall River)** was awarded \$65,000 to implement a system that will facilitate access to continuous and coordinated primary care for the area's homeless population. Components of the program will include establishing a medical home for homeless individuals, forming partnerships with organizations to facilitate access, provider service referrals, and developing an "open access" scheduling system to accommodate appointments with homeless patients. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$195,000.

**Hilltown Community Health Center (Worthington and Huntington)** was awarded \$65,000 to create a medical home for those residing in the Hilltown region and who remain uninsured post-health reform. This program helps 300-

400 individuals receive health care at two community health centers. Key components of the program include additional community health worker staff and medical specialists, and expansion of preventive and education services. This grant is the final installment in a three-year commitment totaling \$195,000.

**Holyoke Health Center** was awarded \$72,500 to extend care into the community and minimize disruptions to access. A nurse case manager will work with the uninsured population of Holyoke and Chicopee to evaluate individuals referred by community partner organizations. Those patients requiring urgent care will be treated accordingly and those able to wait for a primary care appointment will be encouraged by a patient navigator to take charge of their health through the Health Center's various wellness and patient education programs available in the community. This grant is the final installment in a two-year commitment totaling \$145,000.

**Joseph M. Smith Community Health Center (Brighton)** was awarded \$70,000 to expand care coordination services for uninsured adults aged 20-39 and those over age 65. The program will serve approximately 1,500 patients annually and will include assessments of barriers to care faced by these patients and the development of individual preventive service plans that include follow up with patients. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$210,000.

**Justice Resource Institute (Boston)** was awarded \$60,000 to continue efforts focused on improving the continuity and completeness of care for homeless youth and young adults in downtown Boston, with a special focus on those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. The program uses outreach/health care navigators to target high need areas of Boston. The navigators establish access for the target populations in community settings and continue seamlessly into JRI's clinical setting, the Sidney Borum Jr. Health Center. This grant is the final installment in a three-year commitment totaling \$180,000.

**Lowell Community Health Center** was awarded \$75,000 to implement the Lowell Health Compass Program, which will help immigrants in Greater Lowell access the health care system with patient navigators. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$225,000.

**Partners in Life (Boston)** was awarded \$65,000 to develop a Transition to Primary Care program for inmates nearing release from the Suffolk County House of Correction. Prior to release, inmates will receive an initial primary care

visit via telemedicine and schedule an in-person appointment at Shattuck Hospital. For six months after their release, the program will intensively track and support patients in maintaining health coverage and assist with negotiating barriers to care. The program is expected to serve 200 people annually. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$195,000.

**South End Community Health Center (Boston)** was awarded \$55,000 to implement Comp Care, a program that will provide a medical home with integrated medical and mental health services for homeless, uninsured patients; female detainees in the Suffolk County correctional system; and uninsured Latinos in the Greater Boston area. Comp Care will create patient teams consisting of a nurse case manager and community outreach worker. This grant is the final installment in a two-year commitment totaling \$110,000.

**Volunteers in Medicine, Berkshires** was awarded \$60,000 to expand case management services at its free care clinic. The clinic offers preventive services in mental health, and primary and dental care. The clinic expansion will include the development of a case management model that integrates clinical services, outreach, pharmacy services, and quality assurance. A primary focus will be placed on culturally competent care. This grant is the second of an intended three-year commitment totaling \$180,000.

**Women of Means (Boston)** was awarded \$50,000 to support their Aging in Shelters Collaborative, a multi-agency effort to provide health care for chronically homeless women in their 40s and 50s. A nurse case manager will coordinate the care of approximately 100 homeless women living with chronic disease and the deteriorating health conditions that come from homelessness. Women of Means will collaborate in providing care with Rosie's Place, Women's Lunch Place, HEARTH, HomeStart, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, and the Dimock Center.

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### **More about the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation**

The mission of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation is to expand access to health care. Through grants and policy initiatives, the Foundation works with public and private organizations to broaden health coverage and reduce barriers to care. It focuses on developing measurable and

sustainable solutions that benefit uninsured, vulnerable, and low-income individuals and families in the Commonwealth, and served as a catalyst for the pioneering Massachusetts health care reform law passed in 2006. The Foundation was founded in 2001 with an initial endowment of \$55 million from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. The Foundation operates separately from the company and is governed by its own 18-member Board of Directors. It is one of the largest private health philanthropies in New England and in 2007 was awarded the Paul Ylvisaker Award for Public Policy Engagement for its work on Massachusetts health care reform by the Council on Foundations.