

# Working together for a healthier Rhode Island.



# We're Working Together.



At Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, our commitment to improving the health of all Rhode Islanders is an integral part of who we are and how we operate. As a local, nonprofit organization, we strive to make a positive, lasting impact in our community and in the lives of the people we serve. We're proud and excited to share the results of our efforts to reach this goal in 2013 as well as take a look at the opportunities that lie ahead.

This report highlights some of the ways we demonstrated our commitment to the community in 2013, including improving quality of care, increasing access to quality, affordable healthcare, supporting vital programs that serve those most in need, and much more. We are fortunate to partner with many exceptional organizations across the state to help all Rhode Islanders live better, healthier lives—proving once again how much more we can achieve by working together than we ever could alone.

As we celebrate 75 years of service to the Rhode Island community in 2014, we're also looking ahead to the next 75 years and beyond. The opportunities in 2014 are many and varied, and as we did in 2013, we will continue to play a role in making Rhode Island healthier and stronger, now and for generations to come.

*Peter A.*  
 Peter Andruszkiewicz  
 President and CEO



**BlueAngel.**  
 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT



## Enabling Healthier Living Through Education

For many Rhode Islanders, finding their way through the healthcare system and understanding how health insurance works or how healthcare reform affects them can be major barriers to getting the care they need. In 2013, we provided a variety of resources—both online and in the community—to educate and empower people to take control of their health.

### FACILITATING COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

To help Rhode Islanders better understand the current state of healthcare in the U.S., we hosted a series of statewide screenings of *Escape Fire: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare*, a documentary about the American healthcare system and its current flaws and opportunities for improvement. The first screening, held last spring, was followed by a panel discussion moderated by the film's director and producer Matt Heineman. Additionally, in the fall of 2013, we held a statewide showing of the film, simulcasting in four locations on the same night. In 2014, we will make an educational version of the film available in all Rhode Island public libraries.

### HELPING RHODE ISLANDERS UNDERSTAND FEDERAL HEALTHCARE REFORM

With so many people wondering how the new Affordable Care Act affects them, we created our "Let's Understand Healthcare Reform Together" campaign to help answer their questions. The campaign included:

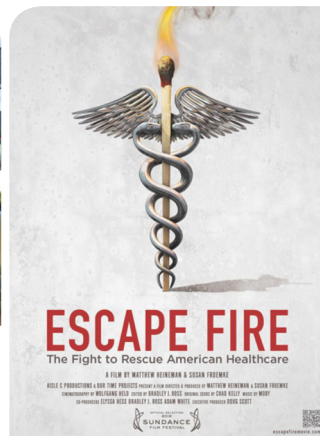
- An easy-to-use website, [bcbsri.com/healthcarereform](http://bcbsri.com/healthcarereform), which helped thousands of Rhode Islanders learn about buying a plan, benefit changes, tax credits, penalties, and more
- A series of seminars for small employers
- Community educational forums specifically aimed at nonprofit organizations to empower them to answer questions from those they serve
- Educational brochures and information

### ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

We understand that cultural competence—the ability of an individual or organization to effectively understand and address the unique perspectives and specific health needs of various communities—is critical to supporting our members. In 2013, nearly 100 of our employees who have regular contact with members about their health or healthcare attended a full-day "Cultural Competence in Healthcare" training workshop. Our employees came away more aware, energized, and committed to understanding our members' diverse health perspectives and needs. We also continue to partner with Latino Public Radio to host the monthly *Sin Seguro* radio program, bringing important information about navigating the healthcare system to the station's primarily Latino listeners.

### MEETING RHODE ISLANDERS WHERE THEY ARE

We recognize the importance of meeting Rhode Islanders face-to-face. Our long-standing partnership with United Way of Rhode Island has given us a variety of ways to help over the years. In 2013, we donated what was formerly our Wellness Van to United Way 2-1-1, a 24-hour hotline that provides information and referrals for a broad range of services to people in need. (Last year, 2-1-1 fielded over 213,000 calls for help, more than any previous year.) The 40-ft. RV is now the "2-1-1 Outreach Van" and is making it possible for United Way 2-1-1 to travel throughout the state and expand its outreach services as well as disaster response in times of emergency.



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## Improving Quality of Care in Rhode Island

We believe that patients should be at the center of the healthcare system. This means doctors work together to coordinate patient care, patient medical records are easily accessible to all healthcare providers, and patients understand their treatment options. Here's a look at how we collaborated with providers in 2013 to improve the quality of care.

### INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF RHODE ISLAND'S MEDICAL WORKFORCE

Primary care plays an essential role in increasing access to affordable, high-quality healthcare for all Rhode Islanders. The Rhode Island Primary Care Educational Loan Repayment Program addresses Rhode Island's shortage of primary care physicians (PCPs) and other professionals by helping to recruit new primary care professionals into our state. The program provides PCPs with up to \$60,000 in loan repayment when they commit to serve at an approved site for at least two years. It was reinstated in 2013 due to the collaborative effort of Blue Cross, the Rhode Island Health Center Association, the Rhode Island Foundation, and other funding agencies.

Building on our belief in the importance of primary care, we partnered with the Rhode Island Foundation and several other organizations to support the state's first Nurse Residency Program. This collaboration focuses on reviewing the current ways that healthcare systems transition new nursing graduates into professional practice. Through the program, licensed registered nurses gain additional skills and guidance from preceptors, who are practicing registered nurses at each clinical site. The program focuses on unemployed and underemployed newly licensed nurses. Rhode Island joined Connecticut in 2012 as one of only two New England states and 20 nationally to receive funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's "The Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action."

### SUPPORTING PROFESSIONALS THROUGH HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGY

In 2013, we contributed more than \$115,000 to help primary care providers and community health centers implement electronic health records (EHRs). The use of EHRs can improve the quality of care and lower

healthcare costs by ensuring providers have easier access to information needed to deliver high-quality care. Since 2009, the Blue Cross EHR Grant Program has provided over \$900,000 to local PCPs for EHR implementation. The program will be undergoing a redesign in 2014.

### IMPROVING CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES FOR PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS

In 2013, we partnered with patient-centered medical home (PCMH) practices to provide them with a Web-based, case-based educational tool called Quality Interactions to help increase the quality of cross-cultural interactions. When patients interact with the healthcare system, they bring with them a broad range of perspectives regarding health and illness, which is often shaped by their social and cultural backgrounds. This tool will support providers' cross-cultural learning so they can provide patients with the best and most appropriate care.

### CONNECTING PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS THROUGH CURRENTCARE

As Rhode Island's health information exchange, CurrentCare allows providers to access a secure electronic network that contains enrolled patients' protected health information such as medications, allergies, and testing results. In 2013, we developed a program and provided nearly \$508,000 to incent healthcare providers to actively promote CurrentCare and help patients enroll. Providers receive incentives for taking the time to discuss the benefits of shared medical records with their patients, enrolling patients, and utilizing CurrentCare functionality. More than 56,000 Rhode Islanders enrolled in CurrentCare through providers eligible to participate in this incentive program—a 30 percent increase in enrollment from the previous year.

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## Ensuring Access to Care for Those Who Need It Most

At Blue Cross, we take our social responsibility seriously. We invest in organizations that address the most critical health issues impacting Rhode Islanders in need. Here are some of the ways we supported individuals and community-based organizations in 2013 to ensure affordable access to care for all Rhode Islanders.

### OPENING THE DOOR TO AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE WITH ACCESSBLUE

Our AccessBlue program provides premium assistance to Blue Cross members who purchase their health insurance directly from us, not through an employer or government-sponsored program, and who meet income eligibility requirements. Until 2013, we were the only health insurer in Rhode Island to offer coverage directly to individuals and families. Since 2006, when the program first launched, we have increased the amount of funding available and expanded income guidelines so that more people could receive assistance. To date, we have distributed \$15.5 million to approximately 28 percent of our Direct Pay subscribers through the AccessBlue program, demonstrating our sincere commitment to improving access to healthcare while addressing the issue of affordability. Last year, we funded an additional \$4.5 million for AccessBlue through the end of 2013 when federal subsidies become available through the Affordable Care Act.

### BLUEANGEL COMMUNITY HEALTH GRANTS

As the cornerstone of our charitable giving efforts, the BlueAngel Community Health Grant program allows us to extend our reach beyond our membership to address critical health issues in our community. In 2013, we awarded \$230,000 to support programs at 10 community-based agencies that are working to break down barriers to good health created by cost, culture, miscommunication, system structure, and lack of education. Here's a look at some of their accomplishments:

- **Amos House** formed a sustainable partnership with Gateway Healthcare to provide an on-site psychiatrist to evaluate clients and provide prescription assistance. Offering mental health services on site eliminates

access barriers so clients can get the psychiatric care they need. The program served 160 clients. Amos House is a nonprofit agency that provides food, housing, education, and job training to individuals and families struggling with homelessness and poverty.

- The **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center** provided 3,308 children, adults, families, and seniors with innovative nutrition and case management services. Efforts included increasing physical activity and eating healthy foods. The center offers high-quality nutritional and educational programming to low-income Newport County residents in a safe, nurturing environment.
- The **Healthy Foods, Healthy Families** program, offered by Farm Fresh RI, enrolled 359 low-income families in 2013. These families participated in interactive, culturally appropriate nutrition lessons, in addition to receiving financial incentives and peer support, to motivate healthy eating decisions. This program is designed to address both the symptoms and the root causes of hunger and obesity.

### IMPROVING ACCESS TO CARE THROUGH ONGOING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Blue Cross maintains long-term partnerships with several community organizations that provide uninsured Rhode Islanders access to essential healthcare services. We continued to support these programs in 2013:

- **Clínica Esperanza** — A clinic-within-a-clinic, Clínica Esperanza/Hope Clinic Emergency Room (CHEER) provided free, walk-in healthcare for 563 uninsured Rhode Islanders. CHEER also provides health screenings (glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure), vaccinations, and pre-employment physicals on a walk-in basis.

- **Rhode Island Free Clinic** — The Clinic provides uninsured, low-income adults a patient-centered medical home through a statewide network of volunteer doctors, medical professionals, and community partners. Open Monday through Friday (including evenings), the Clinic offered free primary care, specialty care, labs and diagnostics, wellness programs, and prescription medications to more than 3,500 eligible patients in 2013.

- **Thundermist Health Center** — The Quick Care program provided nearly 12,000 patients with on-demand care, improving access while reducing emergency department use for non-emergent health issues. The program is open 365 days a year to children and adults.

- **Rhode Island Oral Health Commission** — The annual RI Mission of Mercy is a two-day free dental clinic that provided 929 Rhode Islanders in need with 3,845 dental procedures valued at \$527,738.



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## Contributing to the Health of Our Community

As a local, nonprofit organization, we're here to help all Rhode Islanders improve their health—both by supporting health-focused organizations and by using our environmental resources responsibly. We're proud to support other local, nonprofit organizations in our state that are helping to improve the health of our community with financial donations and in-kind services. More than 50 percent of our employees—from all levels of the organization—donate their time and talent to give back to the community.

### BLUE ACROSS RHODE ISLAND

On September 26, 2013, we held our second annual Blue across Rhode Island day of service. Over 650 employees volunteered nearly 3,500 hours to help more than a dozen nonprofits across the state. Together, our employees cleared brush, built playscapes, painted, harvested food, and more. In addition, we sent out 1,500 Well Kid Kit nutrition and healthy living backpacks to area middle-school children, and provided Amos House with over 3,000 Hygiene Kits for their homeless clients.

### 2013 By the Numbers

- 1,695** volunteer instances
- 6,103** volunteer hours
- \$135,120** value of volunteer hours\*
- \$140,671** in employee fundraising
- \$950,000** in financial or in-kind donations invested by the company
- 175** organizations supported through in-kind donations, volunteerism, or financial support

\*At \$22.14 per hour according to the Independent Sector.

### LIVING GREEN—FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

At Blue Cross, we're making every effort to live green. Our headquarters in downtown Providence is a LEED® Gold-Certified facility, which means it uses far fewer resources than a typical building of its size and operation. Through the sustainable design of the building and efforts such as our recycling program, we're effectively reducing our impact on the environment. Here's a look at what our paper recycling alone saved in 2013:

- The equivalent of **4,040** trees
- **712.93** cubic yards of landfill
- **475.29** barrels of oil
- **1,663,508** gallons of water

We also operate a robust recycling program, which totaled:

- **35,295** lbs. compostable recycling
- **12,520** lbs. commingled recycling



### AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

In 2013, we were proud to receive the following awards and recognition:

**Latino Public Radio** — 2013 Corporate Community Excellence Award for support and collaboration on the health education show, "Sin Seguro" (The Uninsured).

**Thundermist Health Center** — 2013 Community Partnership Award

**Smart Power and National Grid Rhode Island Energy Challenge** — 2013 Rhode Island Energy Champion



### Human Rights Campaign Foundation Corporate Equality Index

For the first time, Blue Cross has been rated in the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation's Corporate Equality Index. HRC improves the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people by working to increase understanding and encourage the adoption of LGBT-inclusive policies and practices. In 2013, 734 businesses were rated on a scale of -25 to 100. We're proud to share that, of the four Rhode Island companies to participate, Blue Cross received the highest rating with a 90.



[www.bcbsri.com](http://www.bcbsri.com)

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