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Blue Cross and Blue Shield to Get Workers out of the Office and On Their Feet in All 50 States

Thousands of Lunchtime Walks Planned for National Walk @ Lunch DaySM

Washington — Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies nationwide are working with employers of all sizes to get their workers to take steps toward healthier lifestyles. Citing the tremendous cost that inactive lifestyles and preventable health conditions have on the nation's healthcare bill, Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies are holding lunchtime walks across America as part of the second annual *National Walk @ Lunch Day*.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies are hosting the walks in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico to engage employees, members and community leaders in healthy activities to promote the benefits of walking. Nationwide, thousands of companies, organizations, state and local governments are participating in this healthy initiative.

Regular, brisk walking is one of the simplest and safest forms of physical exercise and a regular walking program can help control weight, condition the heart and lungs, strengthen bones and help you take the first step to a healthier future. Regular walking also has other positive impacts on health, including decreasing the risk of a heart attack, reducing the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, helping to control weight and improving muscle tone.

"More than 60 percent of all adults in our country do not engage in the recommended amount of physical activity," said Scott P. Serota, president and CEO of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA). "This lack of regular physical exercise can lead to illness and chronic diseases down the road. *National Walk @ Lunch Day* is not only an opportunity for Americans to step outside and take a lunchtime walk, but it is an opportunity to join the Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies in leading a call to action for the nation to embark on a path to a healthier lifestyle."

In Washington, D.C., CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield and Blue Cross and Blue Shield Federal Employee Program employees are joining the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in co-hosting a *National Walk @ Lunch Day* event at the Hubert H. Humphrey building for federal government employees.

"Modern medical science gives every one of us the opportunity to be among the healthiest people who've ever lived," said Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Tevi Troy. "But if you want to live a long and healthy life, you also have to eat well, avoid risky behaviors, and exercise regularly. We at HHS are encouraging people to make these smart choices, and it's great to see private companies doing this as well."

Nationwide, thousands of companies, organizations, state and local governments are hosting or participating in *National Walk @ Lunch Day* events across the country such as Emerson Hospital in Concord, Massachusetts and Kayser-Roth Corporation in Greensboro, North Carolina.

"Emerson Hospital is committed to the health and well-being of our employees," said Christine Schuster, president and CEO, Emerson Hospital. "We know our employees are busy, so walking at lunchtime is a great way to integrate exercise into our day while spending some time with co-workers outside of the office. I look forward to joining my team as we walk our way to better health."

“Our goal at Kayser-Roth Corporation is to leave a legacy of healthier employees by creating an environment that encourages healthier lifestyles,” said Rae Mackall, vice president of human resources at North Carolina-based Kayser-Roth Corporation. “We are encouraging our employees to walk on April 30th for *National Walk @ Lunch Day* as a way to motivate our team to walk everyday.”

Below are highlights of some of the *National Walk @ Lunch Day* activities taking place across the country:

- In Chicago, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois and BCBSA are hosting *National Walk @ Lunch Day* in Grant Park for Loop-based employers to participate in a lunchtime walk.
- Independence Blue Cross (IBC) will lead the charge on walking toward better health in Philadelphia when nearly 4,000 IBC associates and other local workforce employees walk three laps around Philadelphia City Hall in the heart of the downtown business area. Mayor Michael Nutter will be walking along with Dick Vermeil, former coach for the Philadelphia Eagles, who will share personal insight on investing in fitness for life. Actor-historian Ben Franklin will also reminisce about Philadelphia's early days as a city for walking.
- In addition to organizing walks at its offices across Arizona, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona is hosting a *National Walk @ Lunch Day* event on the Senate lawn of the Capitol Complex in Phoenix to congratulate winners of the State Senate health and wellness program for Senate staffers. Activities will include a ceremonial walk around a park adjacent to the State Capitol, led by fifth-grade students representing the winning elementary school in the 2008 Walk On! Challenge.
- In Florida, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida is holding more than 15 walks across the state, including in four locations in Jacksonville, Gainesville, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Orlando, Pensacola, Tampa, Sarasota, Ft. Myers and Port St. Lucie. In addition, several Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida members will hold walks for their employees including the Clay County Board of Commissioners; Exactech, Alachua County Board of County Commissioners, and RTI Biologics (Gainesville); The Blood Alliance (Jacksonville), and Goodwill Industries Suncoast, Inc.
- In Baton Rouge, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is hosting an event at their Baton Rouge campus. The event will feature a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana employee who lost 50 pounds by walking, as well as New Orleans Saints player Mike Karney, a spokesman for BCBSLA's Louisiana 2 Step wellness program. The employees are also participating in a "2-Ton Challenge," where Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is trying to collectively lose 2 tons of weight in 2 years.
- Anthem Blue Cross will mobilize their more than 4,000 associates from throughout California to participate in walks throughout the communities where their offices are located. Then, over the next couple of months, all associates will have the opportunity to participate in a company wide fitness challenge to encourage Anthem staff to get physically active and lead a healthier lifestyle.
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont is hosting six community walks throughout the state in Burlington, Montpelier, Rutland, St. Johnsbury and Bennington. Additionally, BCBSVT coordinated walks at more than 50 employee sites and, with support from the Vermont teachers' wellness program, sponsored student/teacher walks in 37 schools. Vermont expects at least one in every 100 Vermonters to walk on *National Walk @ Lunch Day*.
- In Columbia, South Carolina, BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina is hosting a walk and health fair at Columbia's Finlay Park and is inviting everyone who works in the area as well as the general public to participate in the walk and other festivities.
- Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Colorado will be joined by CBS4 to walk Civic Center Park in honor of *Walk @ Lunch*. The walk will be led by Mari Teitelman, a former Anthem Behavioral Health associate, transplant survivor and winner of 5 medals in the World Transplant Olympics, including 3 Gold Medals, and Homer Harris, aged 82, father of Anthem's Managing Associate General Counsel. Teitelman is training to compete in the World Transplant Olympics again this July. “Fit and fabulous”,

Harris, will talk about how exercise continues to be a staple in his daily life. Harris not only runs and plays tennis five days a week – he just joined Team Anthem in climbing 110 flights of stairs for the American Lung Association’s “Run the Republic” - the event’s oldest participant!

For more information, please visit www.bcbs.com/walkatlunch.

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The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is made up of 39 independent, locally owned and operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide healthcare coverage for more than 100 million – one-in-three – Americans. For more information on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and its member companies, please visit www.BCBS.com.