

Compass

Striving for a Healthy Community within Rhode Island

Widening the Net

As a trusted healthcare partner, [Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island \(BCBSRI\)](#) recognizes that we have an obligation to serve not only our members, but all Rhode Islanders. Making healthcare more accessible to our community is a key part of our corporate social responsibility (CSR)—and it's something we take very seriously.

This issue of *Compass* focuses on our recent efforts to promote healthcare accessibility, and in particular, to support Rhode Island's uninsured—first, through our annual Community Flu Vaccination Program, and second, via the Rhode Island Free Clinic's Physician Network, an initiative that brings healthcare to the uninsured. We have also joined forces with The Rhode Island Foundation by providing \$500,000 in funding to create the PCP Loan Forgiveness Program, a new venture designed to address the shortage of primary care physicians in our state.

Finally, I invite you to visit the newly updated Our Responsibility section of [BCBSRI.com](#), which details our CSR mission and its four "pillars"—leadership, community, diversity & inclusion, and the environment. As always, I welcome your feedback. Please e-mail me at linda.newton@bcbsri.org and let me know what's on your mind.

Sincerely,



Linda Newton

Vice President of
Community Relations,
CSR & Diversity



Getting Ready for Flu Season

As part of our effort to bring health education and prevention screenings to Rhode Island's most vulnerable populations, we coordinate and underwrite the Community Flu Vaccination Program each year. Through this initiative, we partner with both the Health & Wellness Institute and the Wellness Company to provide free seasonal flu shots to communities throughout the state. Our primary focus is to reach the uninsured and underinsured, and we do this by targeting local social service organizations that serve a high number of people who are unemployed, poor, and who are likely to be uninsured.

This year, we will be hosting seasonal flu clinics at nearly 40 organizations, including AIDS Care Ocean State, Big Sisters of Rhode Island, Crossroads Rhode Island, and McAuley House, just to name a few. Through last year's program, we provided more than 600 flu shots to Rhode Islanders who participated in our community clinics, including more than 200 who were uninsured—and we hope to increase our reach in 2009.

The program begins in October and runs through mid-December. For a list of community flu clinic locations, please visit the Community Wellness Events page on [BCBSRI.com](#). *Please note that H1N1 vaccinations will not be available through this program.*



Your Plan for Life.™

BCBSRI Supports New Physician Network

The Rhode Island Free Clinic (RIFC) was founded specifically and exclusively to address the healthcare needs of the uninsured. It is estimated that one in 10 Rhode Islanders are currently without health insurance, or nearly 130,000 people. Through a key initiative recently launched called the Physician Network, the Free Clinic intends to vastly expand its reach and effectiveness in caring for the uninsured.

The Physician Network started in late 2008, and now includes 65 primary care physicians and 25 specialists in 13 communities across the state. The network

allows physicians to see patients in their own offices, which makes it more convenient for doctors to volunteer and patients to seek care. Patients are then referred to specialists and diagnostic labs already in the RIFC network who are also volunteering their expertise and services. The RIFC has also recently opened an office in Newport, further expanding its reach.

In July, the Free Clinic hosted "Picnic in the Parking Lot," where it recognized BCBSRI and the Rhode Island physicians who helped launch its Physician Network. With a \$50,000 contribution from BCBSRI dedicated to supporting the Physician

Network, the RIFC will be able to increase its Physician Network by 100 percent this year, doubling the number of patient visits to 4,000. At the event, BCBSRI's Dr. Gus Manocchia, Vice President and Chief Medical Officer and RIFC volunteer physician, said, "It is our mission to ensure that every Rhode Islander receives quality healthcare, especially during these difficult economic times. We are proud to support the RIFC's goal to increase the number of physicians that participate in the Physician Network and help increase access to healthcare within the community."



Photos from the "Picnic in the Parking Lot" event.

Photographer: Al Weems

Primary Care Initiative Receives Major Funding from BCBSRI

We are pleased to announce that we recently joined a coalition of local institutions, which includes The Rhode Island Foundation and the Rhode Island Medical Society, to create a \$700,000 loan forgiveness pool for primary care physicians (PCPs). The first of its kind in Rhode Island, the goal of the PCP Loan Forgiveness Program is to address the state's growing PCP shortage. "We're delighted that Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island has contributed \$500,000 to our existing pool of \$200,000, becoming our first funding partner in this important new venture," says Neil Steinberg, Rhode Island Foundation President and CEO.

James E. Purcell, President and CEO at BCBSRI, expressed his enthusiasm for this effort to increase the number of primary care physicians in our community. "We must take dramatic steps to promote the vital role that primary care physicians play in providing high-quality healthcare, as well as increase the number of primary care physicians in Rhode Island. Our support for the loan forgiveness program is just the

latest example of our ongoing commitment to achieving these goals."

Nationally and locally there is a shortage of PCPs. A recent report issued by the American College of Physicians noted that, "Primary care, the backbone of the nation's healthcare system, is at grave risk of collapse." A 2008 study by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that only 2 percent of students graduating from medical school plan to practice primary care. It is predicted that the United States will need 40 percent more PCPs by 2020. Currently, 66,000 Rhode Islanders are without PCPs .

The PCP Loan Forgiveness Program will eventually serve doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians' assistants, social workers, and perhaps dentists and dental hygienists. The Rhode Island Student Loan Association will serve as administrator of the program. Applications will be available September 15, 2009 at risla.com.

Employee Resource Group Takes Shape

As we move BCBSRI's diversity initiative forward, we are pleased to announce the formation of our company-sponsored Employee Resource Group (ERG). The ERG is an employee organization designed to foster diversity awareness and a culture of inclusion throughout the company. Membership in the ERG is voluntary and open to all employees. "The ERG is truly employee driven," says David Robert, Manager of Training and Business Performance Consulting, and a member of the ERG Planning Committee. "This type of grassroots effort fosters an environment of trust, pride, and camaraderie, which are the pillars of a great place to work," he says.

The ERG is also an opportunity for employees to:

- Provide insight, perspective, and outreach to diverse communities/markets.
- Exchange ideas, share experiences, and network in a diverse environment.
- Enhance business opportunities, community outreach, recruitment, and retention.
- Serve as a resource for employees and the company.
- Provide "grassroots" input and feedback to the Diversity Steering Committee.
- Represent and promote BCBSRI at community events.

The ERG Planning Committee was pleased to host two introductory sessions in June 2009. During the sessions, participants were asked to fill out a "Gaining Perspective" questionnaire to gauge preferences on a variety of questions related to forming the group, including topics of interest, ERG goals, and logistical details. Some of the issues that the ERG may address include: celebrating and leveraging diversity throughout the company, community outreach to various minority groups, opportunities for personal and professional growth, and increasing cultural competency. As a result of the ERG sessions, 25 employees volunteered to become members.



Board Spotlight: Social Mission Committee

In the May issue of *Compass*, we looked at the role of our Board of Directors, the governing body that helps uphold our core values and mission, as well as set the broad policies, strategic direction, and priorities for BCBSRI. With seven committees of the board in areas such as finance, governance, physician provider and affordability, strategic planning and transformation, and audit, our Board is able to ensure that key aspects of our business are properly managed. Here is a closer look at one of the seven committees, the Social Mission Committee, whose purpose is to provide oversight of our corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy and charitable giving program.

As outlined in its charter, the roles and responsibilities of the Social Mission Committee are to:

- Provide oversight and direction regarding our CSR strategy, including our diversity and inclusion initiative, which involves effectively servicing and supporting the diverse health-care needs of our members and the people of Rhode Island.

- Establish the overall strategic goals of our charitable giving program in light of our charitable mission and community need.
- Review and approve the process for the BlueAngel Community Health Grants and all charitable contributions made on our behalf equal to or in excess of \$25,000; and
- Work with other Board committees to ensure that we are fulfilling our goal of serving our members and the uninsured people of Rhode Island.

The Social Mission Committee is chaired by Juana I. Horton, President and CEO of Horton Interpreting Services, Inc., and also includes The Honorable Edward C. Clifton, Thomas L. Falcone, and John P. Maguire. The committee meets twice a year.

Change of Address

As of January 1, 2010, our new address will be:

**Blue Cross & Blue Shield
of Rhode Island
500 Exchange Street
Providence, RI 02903**

PBN's "40 Under Forty"

We are pleased to announce that our own Shanna Marzilli, Vice President of Operations and Strategic Planning, was chosen



as a *Providence Business News* "40 Under Forty" honoree. This annual accolade goes to 40 people under the age of 40—young professionals, as well as business and nonprofit leaders—and recognizes recipients based on career success, community involvement, and a commitment to making a difference. This year's list was drawn from more than 120 applicants.

In her role as VP of Operations and Strategic Planning, Ms. Marzilli is driving our corporate strategy and working hard to ensure that we succeed. "The focus of our strategic initiatives is to measurably improve our members' health and reduce their healthcare costs," she says. "To accomplish these goals, we will need to collaborate with all of our stakeholders." Ms. Marzilli also serves on the company's Diversity Steering Committee and is a board member for the Rhode Island Breastfeeding Coalition and the March of Dimes.



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