



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation awards \$1.195 million to organizations providing care to the uninsured (Berkshires, Boston, Brighton, Dorchester, Fall River, Holyoke, Huntington, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Springfield, Worcester, Worthington)*

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BOSTON — The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation has awarded \$1.95 million in grants to 17 health care delivery organizations working to implement more cost-effective care for the uninsured through outreach and education, prevention, and medical management. The grants range from \$55,000 to \$95,000.

“State residents who remain uninsured despite the historic gains made under the state’s 2006 health reform law still need access to care,” said Jarrett T. Barrios, President of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. “By funding these organizations, 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 create a coordinated care system of mental health and substance abuse treatment services, integrated with primary care and social supports, which the courts can use as an alternative to jail, when appropriate.

**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, with the goal of ensuring that a greater proportion of homeless individuals receive timely, appropriate care.

**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.

**Dotwell** was awarded \$90,000 to continue its case management infrastructure that assists uninsured patients and ensure they have continual contact with the health center through case managers who monitor their health status. This program model is the result of comprehensive planning and treats health insurance status as a "vital sign" by organizing grant funded and institutional resources to engage uninsured patients who are at greater risk for discontinuing care.

**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 allow uninsured patients to enter into a relationship with a primary care provider and assist with other services that will help the uninsured view the Family Health Center as a medical home.

**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 with complex barriers to care and unusually dire needs.

**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.

**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.

**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 is engaging 300-400 individuals through a coordinated set of activities at two community health centers by expanding their capacity to supportively engage uninsured patients and provide a broad array of services. Key components of the program include additional community health worker staff and medical specialists, and expansion of preventive and education services.

**Holyoke Health Center** was awarded \$72,500 to implement a set of coordinated strategies that 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 supported 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.

**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.

**Justice Resource Institute** was awarded \$60,000 to continue efforts focused on improving the continuity and completeness of care for an uninsured population facing numerous access barriers. The target populations include 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.

**Lowell Community Health Center** was awarded \$75,000 to implement the Lowell Health Compass Program, which will help immigrant communities in Greater Lowell access the health care system. Through the program, the Lowell Community Health Center will develop a team of patient navigators and integrate them into the center's primary care delivery system and coordinate a network of organizations that will facilitate access to care and education about health care issues for uninsured immigrants in the Greater Lowell area.

**Lynn Community Health Center** was awarded \$95,000 to continue implementing a case management model for uninsured adults with serious chronic disease. After a planning year where the health center reviewed hundreds of patient files and contacted uninsured patients the health center designed a Chronic Care Management Team. The team includes nurse case managers, community health workers, and a nutritionist to provide coordinated care services for chronically ill patients suffering from depression and diabetes. LCHC is collecting significant data about those patients and is demonstrating the efficacy of this approach on the patients and the community.

**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.

**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 patients teams consisting of a nurse case manager and community outreach worker.

**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.

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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 endowment has since grown to \$108 million. 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 by the Council on Foundations.