Blues Donate $600k For Healthy Living Programs In 20 Michigan Elementary Schools

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Detroit – Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is awarding $600,000 to support healthy eating and physical activity programs in 20 elementary schools during the 2012-2013 school year.

The program will be implemented by Wayne State University’s Center for School Health and to include programming developed by the Michigan Fitness Foundation. 2012 marks the fourth consecutive Building Healthy Communities program year, and introduces a new partnership with Wayne State University’s Center for School Health and the Michigan Fitness Foundation.

The reason is simple: heading off future costs. A new report released by the Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation says nearly 60 percent of Michigan residents could be obese by 2030 and health care costs could soar if the state doesn’t start shedding pounds.

“The Blues partnership with Wayne State University’s Center for School Health and the Michigan Fitness Foundation is the cornerstone for building a stronger, broader coalition of organizations and supporters to reach a greater number of children across Michigan,” said Shannon Carney Oleksyk, registered dietitian and healthy living advisor for the Blues’ social mission. “We fully believe our collective efforts will have a positive impact on children’s health.”

The funding is part of the Blues’ Building Healthy Communities:

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Engaging Elementary Schools Through Partnership, a comprehensive, school-wide program redesigned by the WSU Center for School Health to surround children and families with education and opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. Other organizations supporting this program include: United Dairy Industry of Michigan, National Food Corps, Gopher Sports and BCBSM Foundation.

Of the many Michigan elementary schools who applied to receive the program, 20 elementary schools, serving more than 10,000 students, will receive healthy school transformation packages, including resources, equipment, professional development and mentoring. These transformation packages will help schools implement and sustain programming that addresses prevention of childhood obesity through a comprehensive, evidence-based, yet school-friendly, approach.

Obesity is the second leading cause of preventable death in the United States, and obese children are more likely to become obese adults with higher incidence of serious health conditions, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis and some cancers. Michigan’s annual obesity expenditures total nearly $3 billion, with 70 percent of medical expenses directly related to this epidemic.

Since 2009, Blue Cross has awarded nearly $2.7 million in Building Healthy Communities funding, impacting more than 35,000 elementary students. The grants are part of the Blues’ mission to promote healthier lifestyles, prevent childhood obesity, reduce associated health risks, improve the health status and ultimately reduce the cost of health care. Visit bcbsm.com/buildhealth or www.coe.wayne.edu/centerschoolshealth for additional details about the Building Healthy Communities program.

The following 20 schools have been selected to participate for the 2012-13 school year:

Southeast Michigan region schools:

Macomb County: Clinton Valley Elementary, 1260 Mulberry, Mt. Clemens
Macomb County: Princeton Elementary, 20300 Statler, St. Clair Shores
Oakland County: Brace-Lederle Global Technological Communications School, 18575 W. Nine Mile Road, Southfield
Oakland County: Dr. Joseph F. Pollack Academic Center of Excellence, 23777 Southfield Road, Southfield
Wayne County: Summit Academy North, 28697 Sibley, Romulus
Wayne County: Voyageur Academy, 4321 N. Military, Detroit
Wayne County: Universal Academy, 4612 Lonyo, Detroit
Wayne County: Beech Elementary School, 19990 Beech-Daly Road, Redford
Wayne County: Thomas Jefferson Elementary, 26555 Westfield Road, Redford
Wayne County: Chandler Park Academy Elementary, 20200 Kelly Road, Harper Woods
Wayne County: Star International Academy, 24425 Hass, Dearborn Heights
Wayne County: West Village Academy, 3530 Westwood, Dearborn
Wayne County: Barth Elementary School, 38270 Barth Road, Romulus
Wayne County: Gaudior Academy, 27100 Avondale, Inkster
Wayne County: Universal Learning Academy, 28015 Joy Road, Westland
Wayne County: Cleveland Elementary, 28030 Cathedral, Livonia

Southwest region schools:
Berrien County: Countryside Academy Elementary, 4800 Meadowbrook Road, Benton Harbor
Van Buren County: Lawrence Elementary School, 714 West St. Joseph Street, Lawrence

Saginaw, Flint and Lansing region schools:
Isabella County: Morey Public School Academy: 418 West Blanchard Road, Shepherd

Northern and Upper Peninsula region schools:
Lake County: Baldwin Elementary: 525 4th Street, Baldwin

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, a nonprofit organization, provides and administers health benefits to more than 4.4 million members residing in Michigan in addition to members of Michigan-headquartered groups who reside outside the state. More at www.bcbsm.com.

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