

As a community and a country, we are facing pandemics of both coronavirus and racism. Those of us in health care have a responsibility to address both. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) has acted swiftly to support COVID-19 vaccination efforts, while broadening our commitment to diversity and inclusion by focusing on racial equity in health.

[www.bluecrossma.org](http://www.bluecrossma.org)



## ACCESSING THE VACCINE

### Transportation Efforts:

- \$1 million commitment to address barriers and challenges in under-resourced communities.
- Partnership with the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers (MLCHC) to develop and execute transportation including:
  - Free rides via Lyft.
  - Dedicated call center support.
  - Financial assistance for existing transportation initiatives at community health centers (CHCs) across the states.
  - Create a three-part series of stand-alone Playbooks that CHCs and other organizations can reference to support the vaccine roll out at their locations, a focus on kids 12-18, and communication and outreach on mobile efforts, booster shots for vaccines and potentially children under 12.
- 20 pop-up vaccine clinics across the state, including a vaccine train spanning four counties.
- BLUEbikes free rides to vaccination appointments promotion (700+ coupon redemptions to date).

### Vaccination Site and Staff Support:

- 16 associates volunteered at vaccination sites.
- More than 25 clinicians volunteered to administer vaccines at various sites.



## EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY

### Increasing Vaccine Confidence:

- Via its health news site, Coverage, published more than 60 articles and videos on vaccine safety and efficacy, as well as amplifying the expertise of community leaders (physicians, firefighters, faith leaders) working to build vaccine confidence:
  - Partnered with faith-based organizations, community health centers, and community development corporations to develop videos on vaccine safety and efficacy, as well as updates via bilingual webinars on testing and vaccinations.
  - All content was made available for free syndication.
  - Content was republished by organizations including large accounts, chambers of commerce, local newspapers, churches and health care providers.
- Created a Coronavirus Resource for members and general public on [Bluecrossma.org](http://Bluecrossma.org).
- Produced a steady cadence of member email and social media posts to drive awareness of vaccine safety, efficacy and access.
- Funded 200+ hours of community canvassing provided by three bilingual community ambassadors in East Boston to attend community events and food distribution opportunities to promote vaccine confidence.
- Funded a series of four virtual community convenings in Dorchester in partnership with a community health center, a Blue Cross subject matter expert, and grassroots organizers to promote the science behind the vaccine.

### Supporting Employers:

- Held dozens of webinars for thousands of employees of commercial accounts as well as BCBSMA associates.



## ADDRESSING INEQUITIES

- Joined AHIP and BCBSA on Vaccine Community Connectors program, pledging to promote vaccinations for 2 million underserved, at-risk Americans.
- Joined the Rally for Recovery Commitment, a national commitment to protect employees and communities by encouraging vaccines and continued mitigation efforts.
- Committed \$1M to help provide equitable access to vaccinations, including a partnership with Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers and other local organizations (see front side for details).
- Developing algorithms to target high-risk members/potential those with prior vaccine hesitancy with vaccine education:
  - BCBSMA lobbied for and was granted access to state vaccine registry data to identify who has not had a vaccine, then stratify by race and ethnicity, map members to identify hot spots or clusters, look at reasons for hesitancy based on member history – and then develop targeted interventions.
- Collaborating with community health centers, faith-based leaders, and community-based nonprofits to address vaccine hesitancy among the communities hardest hit by the pandemic, including, but not limited, to supporting the Black Boston COVID-19 Coalition’s efforts to promote equity in testing and vaccination in Boston’s black and brown communities.
- Provided financial support to Health Care for All’s Help Line, the only statewide multilingual phone service – answering an average of 20,000 calls annually in English, Spanish and Portuguese – that helps Massachusetts residents at all income levels.
- Producing Coverage articles on vaccination that amplify the voices and experiences of people of color as well as addressing questions and concerns specific to these communities.
- Partnering with state department of health to amplify state focus on equity via Coverage articles.



## UPCOMING COVID EFFORTS

- Evaluating opportunity to provide in-home tests to Medicare Advantage population through Signify.
- Assessing the ability to lend service center expertise to help launch a centralized vaccine support service center for community health centers across Massachusetts.

## OUR COMMITMENT

Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies remain committed to helping communities across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic. The belief that every American deserves safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines is at the heart of our commitment. We continue to support widespread vaccination events, as well as targeted efforts to reach those with low access. Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies have so far invested \$11.5 billion to support their communities during the pandemic. We’re using our deep community connections to build confidence in vaccines. And we’re striving to eliminate racial disparities in access. Our goal is to build a more equitable health care system for all, now and beyond the pandemic.

