Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Expedites Access to Testing and Care Related to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

BOSTON, March 6, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) has been monitoring and responding to the serious challenges posed by the outbreak of coronavirus strain COVID-19, and we are taking immediate steps to expedite access to testing and care for our members.

Effective today, we will:

- Cover the full cost of diagnostic tests for COVID-19 for all fully insured members who meet CDC guidelines for testing. Members in fully insured plans will face no co-pay, co-insurance, or deductible for these tests. Self-funded employer groups will have the option of similarly waiving the cost share for these tests.

- Waive co-payments for medically necessary COVID-19 treatment at doctor's offices, emergency rooms and urgent care centers. Any medically necessary treatment for coronavirus is covered under a member's health plan within the United States or internationally.

- Remove any administrative barriers, such as prior authorizations and referrals, for medically appropriate care for COVID-19.

- Waive co sharing for members in plans with telehealth benefits for the screening, evaluation, diagnosis, and/or suggested treatment of COVID-19. Telehealth offers convenience as well as the opportunity to avoid potential exposure to contagion. We will reach out to any employer customers without the benefit to ensure they know this option is available as well. We also will promote our 24/7 nurse hotline **(888-247-2583)**, which is available free to all members and offers a safe and convenient clinical resource for minor ailments or questions.

- Increase access to prescription medications. Members will have access to early refills of their prescription maintenance medications. We will ensure formulary flexibility if there are shortages or access issues.

- Staff and promote a dedicated member help line **(888-372-1970)** for all COVID-19 related inquiries.

- Educate and inform the public about how to contain the spread of the virus. We have launched a regularly updated resource center that includes information about how to stay safe, a downloadable tip sheet for employers, a video featuring one of our physicians, and an FAQ. Our health news site, Coverage, produces timely, original news articles reporting what health consumers need to know about COVID-19.

"We want our members to know that we support them at this critical time," said Andrew Dreyfus, president & CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "We applaud Gov. Charlie Baker's approach to this issue and share his commitment to ensuring the health and safety of our neighbors, today more than ever. Our members should face no barriers in getting the care they need as we face the ongoing challenge of the coronavirus. "Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is coordinating with other Blue Cross Blue Shield plans around the country to ensure that members have access to testing and treatment regardless of where they live. Blue Cross Blue Shield plans are following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines along with other federal recommendations and will continue to support and protect the health and well-being of members and the community.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are committed to the relentless pursuit of quality, affordable health care *with* an unparalleled consumer experience. Consistent with our promise to always put our members first, we are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

SOURCE Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

For further information: Amy McHugh, amy.mchugh@bcbsma.com, 617-246-2311