## Ready, Set, Walk! Chicopee City Employees Cash In With Mayor's Fitness Challenge

### Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts' Healthy Actions wellness plan increases savings available to employers and partners with The Retailers Association of Massachusetts

**Chicopee, MA —June 1, 2015 —** Chicopee Mayor Richard Kos kicked off his "Mayor's Walking Challenge" today. Employees can now receive $25 a month for walking 35,000 steps per week. The challenge is part of a larger wellness program the city has in place for its employees in partnership with its health insurers, including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) and Health New England."This challenge is a win-win. It will not only improve the health and wellness of our employees, but it will save the city and our taxpayers in the long run by reducing employee absences and lowering health care premiums," said Mayor Kos.

The incentive program is open to all 2,000 Chicopee city employees, including the school department, regardless if they carry their insurance through the city. Besides steps, employees can also participate in other physical activities which will qualify towards their steps, including yoga and swimming. Blue Cross is one of the administrators of the program and is giving out pedometers to the employees and tracking the steps through its ahealthyme platform.

"Worksite wellness is one of the most effective ways to improve employee health, while also helping to reduce health care costs. This is why we continuously partner with municipalities such as Chicopee to develop and support strategies that engage employees and achieve positive health outcomes," said Mark Meunier, Blue Cross' Director of Government Programs. "Chicopee offers a role-model worksite wellness program. We are honored to partner with such an engaged leader, and hope that other cities and towns will consider similar walking challenges."

In addition to the walking program, Blue Cross is co-sponsoring onsite biometric screenings to measure blood pressure, body mass index, cholesterol and glucose for both health education and baseline data purposes.

Blue Cross is proud to provide health coverage to 79 percent of Massachusetts municipal entities, their families and to 120,000 federal employees. Blue Cross is committed to partnering with Municipalities to reduce health care costs while improving the health of their employees.

**About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts** Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (www.bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are the trusted health plan for more than 30,000 Massachusetts employers and are committed to working with others in a spirit of shared responsibility to make quality health care affordable. Consistent with our corporate promise to always put our 2.8 million 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.

For further information: CONTACT: Kathleen Makela (617) 246-7725 kathleen.makela@bcbsma.com