Don't Miss Out This Flu Season

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts encourages vaccinations ahead of peak flu season

BOSTON, Oct. 20, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- You can miss a lot when suffering from the flu, a respiratory infection that can be life-threatening. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) wants everyone to experience those important moments in life by getting a flu shot and staying healthy this flu season. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that seasonal flu activity in the United States can begin as early as October, peak in January or February, and last through May.

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To ensure members get the message, Blue Cross is kicking off a social media campaign that illustrates what you might miss during a bout with the flu – an opening night, the big game, or a critical time at work or school.

"We want all of our members to get a flu shot this year, but it's especially important that children under two, adults 65 and older, pregnant women, and those with chronic medical conditions get vaccinated," said Dr. Tom Hawkins, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts' medical director.

Blue Cross members can get vaccinated against the flu at no cost from participating network providers, including:

Primary care provider/nurse practitioner's/physician assistant's office	Specialist physician's office
Certified nurse-midwife's office	Limited Services Clinic, such as CVS MinuteClinic™
Urgent care center	Community health center
Home health care provider	Member's worksite (if administered by our company's vendor, Maxim)
Public access clinic sponsored by cities and towns	Outpatient department of a hospital

Members can also find a provider using the "Find a Doctor" tool onMyBlue. Members must bring their Blue Cross ID card with them at the time of service.

In addition to getting vaccinated, follow theseflu prevention tips:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water.
- Use antiseptic hand gels that contain alcohol when soap and water are not available.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with the inside of the elbow or a tissue, not your hand.
- Wipe down toys and shared surfaces like doorknobs frequently.
- Stay home if you're sick.

Flu symptoms include: a fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Diarrhea and vomiting may also occur in some cases.

If you develop flu symptoms:

- Avoid contact with others, get rest, stay hydrated, and seek treatment early.

- Consult a doctor or the Blue Care Line℠ , Blue Cross' free hotline, at 1(888) 247-BLUE (2583). Members can speak with a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Take acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or naproxen sodium. Children and teenagers should stay away from aspirin. As always, check with your doctor to make sure these treatments are appropriate.

For more information on protecting yourself from the flu, visitwww.bluecrossma.com/flu or the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/flu. Massachusetts residents looking for up-to-date flu information should call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at 1(617) 624-6000 or visit www.mass.gov/dph/flu.

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're the trusted health plan for more than 25,000Massachusetts 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're rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

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