Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Expands Coverage and Access for Members During the Coronavirus Pandemic

BOSTON, March 18, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- In response to the serious challenges posed by the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) announced today it will cover all medically necessary covered services with in-network providers, via phone (telephonic) or virtually (telehealth), at no cost to members, effective retroactively to March 16, 2020. These visits will be reimbursed at the same rate as face-to-face care for any provider, for both medical and behavioral health care, as long as they meet clinical standards, for the entire period of the Massachusetts public health emergency.

"We want our members to know they can continue getting the care they need during this unprecedented time," said Andrew Dreyfus, president and CEO of Blue Cross. "These changes allow members to consult with their clinicians over the phone or virtually to ensure continuity of care and to help avoid potential spread of contagion. We are doing everything we can to ensure that our members can get the medical and emotional support they need during this unprecedented public health event."

Blue Cross has also taken the following steps to expedite access to care and testing related to COVID-19 for duration of the Massachusetts declared public health emergency:

- Waived member cost share (co-pays, co-insurance and deductibles) for medically necessary COVID-19 testing, counseling, vaccines (when available) and treatment and supportive care at doctor's offices, urgent care centers and emergency departments (excluding inpatient care), in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines. Any medically necessary treatment for COVID-19 is covered under a member's health plan within the United States or internationally.
- Removed any administrative barriers, such as prior authorizations and referrals, for medically appropriate treatment for COVID-19.
- Increased access to prescription medications. Members have access to early refills of their prescription maintenance medications. We will ensure formulary flexibility if there are shortages or access issues.
- Staffed and promoted a dedicated member help line **(888-372-1970)** for all COVID-19 related inquiries.
- Promoted 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.

Blue Cross is also committed to educating and informing the public about how to contain the spread of the virus. The company launched a regularly updated resource center that includes information about how to stay safe, a downloadable tip sheet for employers, a video featuring a Blue Cross physicians, and answers to frequently asked questions. Our health news site, Coverage, produces timely, original news articles reporting what health consumers need to know about COVID-19.

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. All 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.

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