BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS SUPPORTS VACCINATION TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FLU

BOSTON, Nov. 21, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- With the holiday season approaching and AAA predicting heavy holiday travel, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Inc. (Blue Cross) is urging everyone to get their flu vaccines and COVID-19 booster shot.

"The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is to get the flu shot," said Dr. Tom Hawkins, senior medical director, population health & analytics at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "This is the earliest start to the flu season we've seen in years and the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control shows a sharp rise in the flu already. With people traveling for the holidays, the chance of spreading the flu is extremely high."

The health plan's "Stopping the flu starts with you" campaign is underway and reminds members and the public that the flu vaccine is safe, effective, readily available, and free of cost to most people with insurance.

For Blue Cross members, messages on social media and emails provide access to timely and relevant information on the health plan's Flu Resource page. Members can access tools to help locate a flu shot provider, videos and articles on the flu and flu prevention, as well as other helpful health care resources and links to in-depth reporting on the virus published on Coverage, Blue Cross' award winning public news site.

Dr. Hawkins joins public health experts across the country in encouraging people to also get vaccinated for COVID-19, if they haven't yet, or to get the latest booster shot that protects against the newest variants of COVID. The flu and COVID vaccines can be given in the same health care visit safely and are proven to lessen the severity of illness. Both flu and COVID-19 can lead to serious illness, hospitalization, and even death, especially for people 65 and older, with compromised immune systems, or certain conditions including asthma, heart disease or diabetes.

Complicating this cold and flu season is an increase in cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). It usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms but can be serious, especially for infants and older adults.

There is no vaccine for RSV, which is another reason physicians encourage vaccination for the flu and COVID-19. Vaccination dramatically reduces one's risk of being infected with flu and/or COVID-19 while sick with RSV.

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 and equitable 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: For further information: Kelsey Pearse, kelsey.pearse@bcbsma.com