Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Supports Metro Boston Urban Reforestation Efforts Through Bluebikes Sponsorship

For every ride taken on Bluebikes in September, Blue Cross will donate$1 to the Boston Tree Alliance program as part of health plan's sustainability commitment

BOSTON, Sept. 5, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- In recognition of Environmental Awareness Month,Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ("Blue Cross") is donating $1 for every ride taken on Bluebikes in September* to the Boston Tree Alliance, a City of Boston program working with Mass Audubon to bolster the City's tree canopy, the parts of the city that are shaded by trees. The donations will apply to all rides taken across the Bluebikes system's 13 municipalities: Arlington, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Newton, Revere, Salem, Somerville, and Watertown. Blue Cross is the sponsor of Bluebikes, which is owned by the municipalities and operated by Lyft.

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The state's largest health plan is committed to advocating for the environmental health of its communities while expanding public bike sharing as a sustainable and healthy mode of transportation. BCBSMA's donations will go directly towards the Boston Tree Alliance and its tree planting and care in environmental justice neighborhoods that have been identified in the City's Heat Plan and Urban Forest Plan. Growing the urban forest will help reduce heat island impacts and public health stressors, increase Boston residents' access to the physical and emotional benefits trees provide, improve quality of life, and promote biodiversity.

"As a result of redlining and historic disinvestment, communities of color experience heat and public health stressors disproportionately," said Mariama White-Hammond, Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space for theCity of Boston. "We are thrilled about the sponsorship from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Bluebikes, and Lyft and grateful for their commitment to help us grow the tree canopy in environmental justice neighborhoods, delivering equitable solutions to areas that need it most."

Biking itself has a positive environmental impact. According to a 2021 study on commuting data fromBloomberg, choosing a bike over a car just once a day reduces an average person's carbon emissions from transport by 67%. Additionally, based on research from The Adventure Cycling Association, just moderate increases in bicycle use each year could save an estimated 6 to 14 million tons of carbon dioxide.

"The health of our communities is closely linked with the health of our environment and Bluebikes is a key piece of Blue Cross' pledge to build sustainable solutions to better health," said Jeff Bellows, vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs at Blue Cross. "We have a 10-year commitment to reducing our environmental impact and we're proud to support crucial environmental initiatives like Tree Alliance through Bluebikes."

Environmental stewardship is a key priority for Blue Cross, which has set a goal to become carbon neutral and zero waste by 2030, thereby reducing its environmental impact. Since 2010, the health plan has drastically reduced the use of electricity, water, and paper, and cut the amount of waste going to landfills by almost 80%. Similarly, Blue Cross launched a Health Justice Partnership and Grant program, providing in funding and pro bono support to support organizations focused on reducing environmental health inequities in local communities. The health plan's donation to the Tree Alliance aligns with the company's commitments to a more equitable, sustainable Commonwealth.

"We deeply appreciate Blue Cross' commitment to environmental stewardship and to helping the Tree Alliance enhance Boston's tree canopy, which will improve human health, increase wildlife diversity, and battle climate change,"Stacey Beuttell,

Senior Director of Mass Audubon's Nature in the City program. "We encourage everyone to take a Bluebikes ride during this Environmental Awareness Month to show their support for climate action."

Blue Cross has been the title sponsor of Bluebikes since its launch in May 2018 and remains committed to expanding public bike sharing in Greater Boston as a safe and sustainable public transportation option through its partnership with the municipal owners of Bluebikes and Lyft. In the five years of Blue Cross' sponsorship, the system has doubled in size, adding 200 stations and more than 4,000 bikes.

**Blue Cross will donate $1 up to $10,000 for every Bluebikes ride taken from September 5 – September 30, 2023.*

About Bluebikes
Bluebikes is public transportation by bike. The system is jointly owned and managed by the Cities of Boston, Cambridge, Everett, Salem, and Somerville and the Town of Brookline. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is the system's title sponsor. Riders can find 447 stations and more than 4,000 bikes across 13 municipalities in Metro Boston. Since 2011, more than 14 million trips have been taken by bike share. For more information about Bluebikes, visit bluebikes.com.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (bluecrossma.org) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are committed to the relentless pursuit of quality, equitable and 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.

About Boston Tree Alliance
In May 2023, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu announced the Boston Tree Alliance program, a product of the collaboration between the Environment and Parks & Recreation Departments and the Office of Green Infrastructure. The City of Boston chose Mass Audubon to convene the Alliance, a group of community-based organizations and nonprofits, and work with private landowners to plant and care for trees on private land. Visit boston.gov/environment-and-energy/boston-tree-alliance-program.

SOURCE Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

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