

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Local nonprofits receive Community Health Awards from Excellus BlueCross Blue Shield Program aims to reduce health disparities and help with impact of COVID-19

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Fourteen Rochester area nonprofit organizations are receiving Excellus BlueCross BlueShield's Community Health Awards to help improve health and health care. The awards are part of more than \$200,000 the health plan is donating to 53 nonprofits across New York.

Each organization will receive up to \$5,000 to fund programs that help address the economic and social conditions influencing the health of the community, reduce health disparities, support clinical health improvement, and/or assist our communities in dealing with the impact of COVID-19.

"We are well aware of the financial burdens placed on our local nonprofit organizations this past year, and we are committed to supporting their efforts as they address the health needs of our communities," said Stephen Cohen, MD, senior vice president and chief medical officer for Excellus BlueCross BlueShield. "These grants demonstrate our corporate commitment to supporting community organizations that share our mission as a nonprofit health plan."

Organizations are selected based on the proposed program's scope of need, goals and the number of people expected to benefit from it.

The nonprofit organizations in the Finger Lakes region chosen to receive Excellus BCBS Community Health Awards include:

- **Baden Street Settlement of Rochester, Inc.** - Funding will be used to support a Telemedicine Hub so that community members without computer equipment or internet connection can access telemedicine services to communicate with their physicians and other health care providers.
- **Black Physicians Network of Greater Rochester, Inc.** - The award will be used to support the organization's efforts to provide COVID-19 vaccines to parts of the community challenged by lack of digital connection and transportation.
- **Boys & Girls Clubs of Rochester, Inc.** - Funding will support a Trauma Informed Care Study to assess the emotional and behavioral reactions that may indicate traumatic stress in the youth of our community in light of the pandemic, health and safety concerns, remote learning challenges, food insecurity, and racial unrest.

- **Catholic Family Center** - for its Support to Aging Residents (STAR) program serving low income, frail elderly, or seniors with limited English language skills. Funding will assist in obtaining COVID-19 vaccinations for clients, including help navigating the system to schedule appointments, transportation and accompaniment to appointments, and follow-up monitoring.
- **Catholic Charities of Livingston County** - for the Mount Morris Food Pantry. Funding will help ensure that the shelves of the pantry remain well stocked with healthy food.
- **Child and Family Resources, Inc.** - to support its Healthy Families Community Baby Showers. Prenatal parents in Ontario and Yates counties are invited to this free event with a focus on newborn health and safety education and available community resources. Funding will help provide participants with "Healthy Home Baby Bags" filled with items to help parent(s)-to-be to create a safe and clean environment for a newborn.
- **First Genesis Development Corporation** - to provide coronavirus vaccination assistance for seniors. Funding will help support coordination of assisting seniors over age 70, especially those in Black & Brown communities within the Greater Rochester area, with online vaccination applications, transportation, and assistance at vaccination sites.
- **Friends of the Rochester Public Market, Inc.** - Funding will support the Market Token Program which allows shoppers to use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase healthy foods from the Public Market's 130 local vendors.
- **Gilda's Club Rochester** - Funding will assist a new program that provides free cancer support services to city residents with focus in the African American and Latino communities. Health and wellness, healthy cooking and nutrition, support groups, survivorship, and Ask the Expert services will be offered at the clubhouse on Alexander Street and at sites throughout the city, such as community centers and churches.
- **Judicial Process Commission** - for The New Journey for Mothers program that serves women inmates who are pregnant and/or mothers with children, who are being released to the Monroe county community from the local jail. Funding will help provide crisis counseling, one-on-one counseling, therapeutic support groups, referrals to health care services, and coordination of family reunification.
- **Mental Health Association of Rochester/Monroe Inc.** – COVID-19 Vaccinations for those with Mental Health Conditions initiative. The award will support outreach in Livingston, Monroe, and Ontario counties to promote vaccine awareness, education, peer services, and help identify and find solutions to barriers such as transportation assistance, online registration and appointment reminders.
- **Southwest Area Neighborhood Inc.** - COVID-19 Facts initiative. Funding will assist in providing neighborhood families and seniors with vaccine information and access to personal protective equipment for those who lack economic resources.

- **Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center** – The award will support telehealth services to provide patient access to virtual medical and mental health care.
- **The Urban League of Rochester** – Project COVID-19 Vaccination Action. Funding will support community outreach to Rochester residents with timely COVID-19 vaccine information and resources.

“These awards complement our existing grants and sponsorships to agencies that work to enhance the quality of life and health of our upstate New York communities,” said Holly Snow, director community investments and partnerships for Excellus BlueCross BlueShield.

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield has been serving upstate New Yorkers for more than 85 years. In that time, the company has supported hundreds of programs that help residents in our community live healthier and more secure lives through access to high-quality, affordable health care.

The company’s corporate giving follows all applicable laws and regulations and does not support funding organizations that conflict with its corporate mission, goals, policies or products.

For more information on our Community Health Awards, go to ExcellusBCBS.com/Community.

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Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, is a nonprofit health plan with 1.5 million upstate New York members. The company's mission is to help people live healthier and more secure lives through access to high-quality, affordable health care. Its products and services include cost-saving prescription drug discounts, wellness tracking tools and access to telemedicine. With more than 3,500 employees, the company is committed to attracting and retaining a diverse workforce to foster innovation and better serve its members. It also encourages employees to engage in their communities by providing paid volunteer time off as one of many benefits. To learn more, visit ExcellusBCBS.com.