



MASSACHUSETTS

2022 Community Benefits Annual Report

as submitted to the Office of the Attorney General, July 2023

MISSION STATEMENT

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts HMO Blue (the Company) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan recognized as one of the nation's best for member satisfaction and quality. We count more than 25,000 Massachusetts employers as our customers and serve nearly three million members. We are committed to ensuring our members have access to high-quality, affordable, and equitable health care with an unparalleled consumer experience. Through the investment of resources — time, talent, and financial — we demonstrate our values and commitment to be a thoughtful and effective corporate citizen.

Complex social and environmental factors have immeasurable impact on individuals, families, and communities across the state. Further, the nation's legacy of racial injustice and disparities in health continue to strain historically marginalized communities. As such, we are deeply committed to help all Massachusetts community members lead healthy lives by striving to create a more equitable and just Commonwealth.

Advancing our mission requires dismantling the physical, mental, and emotional barriers to wellness through partnerships with civic and community leaders. This approach is rooted in justice and understanding social factors — at the individual, family, neighborhood, city, state, and national levels — that influence health outcomes. Along with this understanding, we pledge to operate within a context of respect and trust-based philanthropy, a core set of values aimed at advancing equity, changing the power dynamic, and building mutually accountable corporate and community partnerships.

Based on a comprehensive review of community health needs assessments, we focus our community benefits work on upstream factors affecting individual and community health by addressing three impact areas: chronic disease, mental health/substance use disorder, and access to health care. This work is accomplished through efforts by both Blue Cross and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation (the Foundation).

INTERNAL OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS PROGRAM

Blue Cross' senior leadership team, chaired by the president and chief executive officer, is responsible for ensuring the Community Benefits Program meets the needs of the community at large in a way that successfully leverages our resources and expertise. The team includes the following executives¹:

- Tony Centrella, Interim Chief Financial Officer, Senior Vice President
- David Corkum, Chief Commercial Officer, Executive Vice President
- Sarah Iselin, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Rich Lynch, Chief Operating Officer, Executive Vice President
- Jay McQuaide, Chief Communications and Citizenship Officer, Senior Vice President
- Sandhya Rao, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, Senior Vice President
- Candace Reddy, Chief of Staff, Executive Office, Vice President
- Don Savery, General Counsel, Senior Vice President

¹ As of July 2023

- Sue Sgroi, Chief Human Resources Officer, Executive Vice President
- Sukanya Soderland, Chief Strategy Officer, Senior Vice President
- Linda Williams, Chief Audit Officer, Senior Vice President

The corporate citizenship team, with input from representatives from all areas of the company, is responsible for setting and successfully executing the Community Benefits Program. Reporting to the chief communications and citizenship officer, the vice president of corporate citizenship & public affairs' portfolio of responsibilities includes overseeing financial investments in the community, employee civic engagement, climate and health resilience, and public affairs. To ensure transparency, an annual corporate citizenship report is shared with the board of directors, and the chief communications and citizenship officer meets with the corporate contributions committee of the board and other internal stakeholders for review as needed. ²

The Foundation also is an important component of the Community Benefits Program. Formed in 2001 with an endowment from Blue Cross, this private foundation operates independently from the company. The Foundation is governed by a 15-member board of directors composed of the following health care and community leaders³:

- Andrew Dreyfus, former President and Chief Executive Officer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Chair)
- Patricia Washington, Board Advisor (Vice Chair)
- Zamawa Arenas, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Flowetik
- Carlos Cappas, PsyD, Chief Behavioral Health Officer, Lynn Community Health Center
- J.D. Chesloff, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Roundtable
- Denise De Las Nueces, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program
- Sandro Galea, MD, DrPH, Dean and Robert A. Knox Professor, Boston University School of Public Health
- Shelly F. Greenfield, MD, MPH, Kristine M. Trustey Endowed Chair in Psychiatry, Chief Academic Officer and Chief of the Division of Women's Mental Health, Mclean Hospital; Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School
- Michael Hunter, Vice President of Business Development, Trinity Financial
- Thea James, MD, Vice President of Mission and Associate Chief Medical Officer, Boston Medical Center; Assistant Professor of Medicine, Boston University School of Medicine
- Mary Kay Leonard, Independent Consultant
- Antonia McGuire, Senior Consultant, John Snow, Inc.
- Michael Miller, Strategic Policy Director, Community Catalyst
- Sandhya Rao, MD, Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
- Henry M. Thomas III, JD, former President and Chief Executive Officer, Urban League of Springfield, Inc.

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

We work in partnership with, and seek input from, a wide range of organizations across the state, as well as national experts, to assess community health needs and inform a robust portfolio of work across Massachusetts.

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To refine our approach to community health, we engaged a public health consulting firm, Health Resources in Action, in 2020 to review 10 community health needs assessments, 6 community health improvement plans,

² The Corporate Contributions Committee of the Board, formed in 2011, presently consists of three members of the Blue Cross Board of Directors.

³ As of July 2023

and supporting research studies conducted across the commonwealth from 2017–2020. Refer to Appendix A for a summary of the assessment. The material focused on the populations of highest need (e.g., youth, older adults, and low-income individuals) and helped identify top priorities for our Community Benefits Program: **chronic disease, mental health/substance use disorder, and access to health care.**

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

We assess our approach and impact on an ongoing basis. From 2017–2020, we engaged not-for-profits in programs and initiatives that championed a healthy lifestyle for all Massachusetts community members. The strategy was designed to reduce disparities by improving access to healthy eating, physical activity, and healthy environments, but it did not explicitly address racial and ethnic inequities. Through discussions, convenings, collaborations, and strategic planning that engaged scores of internal and external stakeholders, experts, and leaders, we evolved our strategic focus to Health Justice, prioritizing changes that improve opportunities and health outcomes for everyone, with special attention and commitment to communities most affected by health inequities.

We identified **three interconnected areas of focus** to create sustainable, community-driven change:

- **Food justice:** Ensure access to healthy and culturally relevant food and contribute to building a sustainable food system.
- **Environmental justice:** Overcome the disproportionate impact of pollution and environmental degradation on under-resourced communities.
- **Racial justice:** Eliminate systemic, interpersonal, and institutional racism that contributes to disparate health outcomes.

We employ a **three-pronged strategy** to advance health justice across Massachusetts. Refer to Appendix B for detailed Health Justice Strategy:

- **Strategic partnerships:** Accelerate advances in health justice through multiyear funding, training and facilitation, pro bono support, and networking opportunities for not-for-profit partners.
- **Investments, engagement, and activism:** Leverage financial investments and volunteer resources to support organizations that focus on health justice.
- **Thought leadership and convenings:** Convene stakeholders to share insights and promising practices around health justice innovation to drive change.

Furthermore, we operate under a trust-based philanthropy approach grounded in mutual accountability, trusted philanthropic systems, and community-driven strategic thinking. To get there, we engage in **six practices** that change the power dynamics and structural barriers between funders and not-for-profits.

- **Give multiyear, unrestricted funding.** We provide long-term flexible funding to allow organizations to allocate resources where they need it most, spurring innovation and enhanced impact.
- **Do the homework.** We get to know the issues and organizations in our region, saving not-for-profits time in the early stages of the vetting process.
- **Simplify and streamline paperwork.** We focus on building relationships with not-for-profits to save time and gain a deeper understanding of their work.
- **Be transparent and responsive.** We model transparency, power awareness, and vulnerability to build relationships rooted in trust and mutual accountability.
- **Solicit and act on feedback.** Our work is informed by the expertise and experience of partners and communities.
- **Offer support beyond the check.** Responsive, adaptive, and non-monetary support bolsters leadership, capacity, and organizational health.

In 2020, the Foundation board endorsed three strategic focus areas for 2020–2023: coverage and care, behavioral health, and structural racism and racial inequities in health. Under the guidance and leadership of its board and president and chief executive officer, the Foundation identified the following **principles** underlying its work:

- Health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.⁴
- Racism is a public health emergency and health care is a racial and social justice issue.
- The Foundation is committed to listening to and learning directly from communities and community members experiencing racism and health inequities.
- The Foundation invests in community-based, grassroots organizations led by people of color, who play a crucial role in bringing about racial justice in health care.
- The Foundation works to foster racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion through its grant and consultant partners, policy and research initiatives, convenings, Health Coverage Fellowship, the Massachusetts Institute for Community Health Leadership programs, and in its internal policies, procedures and practices.
- The Foundation is committed to promoting pragmatic policy solutions that can effect change in the short-term, while building a framework and a vision for bold, longer-term solutions.
- The Foundation holds itself accountable with metrics developed to measure its impact on processes, relationships, and results related to racism and racial inequality in health. The Foundation invites the communities it serves to hold it accountable by sharing these metrics regularly with its partners and requesting feedback.
- Foundation staff is committed to developing their expertise, knowledge, and skill in dismantling racism and racial inequities in health from community members experiencing these issues and through professional development and training.
- The Foundation works in close partnership with grant partners while also being cognizant of the power dynamics that are a typical part of the philanthropic relationship.

While the Foundation's mission has not changed in its 22 years of existence, in 2021, the board acted to update the language of its mission statement to better reflect the above principles and avoid stigmatizing language. Approved by the board in 2021, the statement reads: *The mission of the Foundation is to ensure equitable access to health care for all those in the Commonwealth who are economically, racially, culturally, or socially marginalized.*

Both the Company and the Foundation's complementary outreach, assessment, and evaluation efforts reaffirm that a health equity lens is pivotal for our Community Benefits Program. In addition, employee volunteerism; diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging; and climate and health resilience serve as internal levers to build a healthy and just community for all.⁵

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

We interact with nearly 500 not-for-profits serving communities across Massachusetts to support the efforts of all those in the Commonwealth to live healthier lives. We engage key business, community, and civic leaders to help identify needs and develop shared goals. Striving to be community-informed and led, we operate under a trust-based philanthropy approach, offering streamlined application and reporting processes, multiyear partnerships, and a commitment to building relationships based on transparency, dialogue, and mutual learning (as noted in the previous section). The corporate citizenship department engages with community partners and participates in best practice forums to ensure priorities are current and align with community need. As well as convening key stakeholders across private, public, and community sectors, corporate citizenship staff members meet with community partners on an annual basis either in person, virtually, or via site visits to understand and reassess funding and civic engagement needs. These meetings provide us with the opportunity to regularly gather important information about the needs of populations served, better understand each organization's evaluation metrics, and provide feedback and ideas about potential funding proposals.

⁴ World Health Organization (WHO)

⁵ In March 2023, Blue Cross announced that "belonging" will now be part of our diversity, equity and inclusion work (now DEIB), a direct result of employee feedback.

As a corporate partner, we bring together not-for-profits with similar missions to collaborate and share best practices. In 2022, we hosted a virtual convening titled, *Sharing Challenges, Seeking Solutions: Centering Health Justice*. The interactive session brought together 60 not-for-profit leaders to share how justice and equity are positioned within each of their organizations and to learn from featured conversation catalysts. Attendees left the session with concrete examples from other organizations on how to best support their staff and community members, as well as provided input and offered guidance on the development of our Health Justice Partnership and Grant program.

We have several funding strategies throughout the year:

- The first provides funding to applicants on a rolling and ongoing basis. The funding guidelines, which are widely distributed and made available via our [website](#), provide specific instructions for applicants. All requests are carefully considered on a biweekly basis by an internal corporate contributions committee composed of leaders representing diverse business perspectives. Organizations seeking funding are encouraged to speak with corporate citizenship staff to get a complete understanding of our Community Investment Program.
- A second process is through the active, public solicitation of requests for general operating and programmatic funding that align with our Health Justice strategy. Grant guidelines – which are widely distributed via direct email and across convening organizations, such as Philanthropy Massachusetts, Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, United Way, and others – explain the impact we seek to generate with the funding and provide specific instructions. Applications undergo multiple levels of review and input from select subject matter experts across the company. Applicants are encouraged to speak with corporate citizenship staff as they prepare their proposals to ensure they have a complete understanding of the funding opportunity and can receive preliminary feedback. All our grant programs include rigorous evaluation and shared learning components that provide valuable information to both community partners and program staff and ensure community investments align with our corporate citizenship strategy.
- Similarly, the majority of the Foundation's grants are offered through program areas that are in direct alignment with the Foundation's strategic focus areas. Most grant programs are multiyear awards, focusing on coverage and care, behavioral health, and structural racism and racial inequities in health. The Foundation also awards a limited number of one-year responsive grants to fund projects which empower communities to advance health equity at the community level and which positively impact the health or health care related needs of Massachusetts community members who are economically, socially, culturally, or racially marginalized. Grants are issued during specific grant cycles each year. The Foundation publicly announces all opportunities for new applicants to seek support. The grant guidelines, which are widely distributed and made available via the Foundation's [website](#), explain the impact the Foundation seeks to generate with the funding and provide specific instructions for applying for grants. Once requests are received, they undergo up to two levels of staff review and then up to two levels of board review before grants are awarded. Applicants are encouraged to speak with Foundation staff as they prepare their proposals to ensure they have a complete understanding of the funding opportunity they are pursuing. Foundation staff can provide preliminary feedback and ideas about the applicant's project. All Foundation grant programs include rigorous evaluation and shared learning components that provide valuable information to both grant partners and program staff and ensure the community investments are in line with the Foundation's mission. Refer to Appendix C for a detailed list of Foundation grant program areas.
- Another funding mechanism, offered through the Foundation's **Catalyst Fund**, provides small, one-year, non-renewable, capacity-building mini-grants to not-for-profits to help strengthen their capacity to expand access to health care in Massachusetts. The Catalyst Fund is intended to help organizations pay for activities that can strengthen their infrastructure, build capacity, plan, and, as its name implies, help spark innovation. These grants are funded by Blue Cross employee contributions. Since 2019, Blue Cross has matched all employee donations to the Catalyst Fund, and one hundred percent of the donations are used for grants to not-for-profits, with no funds used for the Foundation's administrative

costs. The application process for the Catalyst Fund is conducted on a rolling basis and applications are reviewed monthly by a 12-member committee composed of Blue Cross employees.

In addition to engaging community partners, we share and garner best practices on critical social issues impacting Massachusetts communities. We are a member of several global, national, and regional corporate social responsibility industry groups, including:

- **Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship**, a global, membership-based knowledge center, helps organizations align environmental, social, and corporate governance objectives and business goals to create a more sustainable and prosperous future for all. The center engages a network of more than 500 member companies to share knowledge and expertise about the practice of corporate citizenship through research, executive education, expert insights and tools, and networking opportunities. Members of the corporate citizenship staff serve as subject matter experts in various capacities (e.g., moderator, panelist, advisor, etc.) at the center's annual Global Conference, including a 2022 panel focused on partnership and trust-based philanthropy. Blue Cross' vice president of corporate citizenship & public affairs serves as a member of the executive forum for the center, representing the Blue Plans, and the senior director of social impact serves as a member of the health equity advisory board.
- The **Community Investments & Partnership Workgroup of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association** gathers corporate social responsibility colleagues across the country to share best practices, discuss national visibility and partnership opportunities, and establish national metrics as they relate to Blue Cross' system-wide community engagement. Blue Cross' vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs, the senior director of social impact, and the Foundation's administration and strategic initiatives officer are members of this workgroup.
- The **Greater Boston Givers Group** and the **Corporate Volunteer Council** gather groups of regional corporate citizenship professionals to meet regularly and discuss social issues that have an impact on the communities they serve and the not-for-profits making measurable impact in these areas. Together, the groups are better able to identify where funding gaps and civic engagement opportunities may exist.
- The **Massachusetts Nonprofit Network** has more than 700 not-for-profit members across the state with a vast range of sizes, missions and budgets and is the voice of the not-for-profit sector, bringing together not-for-profits, funders, community and business leaders, and elected officials. The network recognizes that strong not-for-profits build strong communities, and we are proud to work with the network to strengthen the not-for-profit community of the Commonwealth.
- **Philanthropy Massachusetts**, a not-for-profit group that offers networking opportunities, resources, and research and learnings for corporate partners and not-for-profits alike, brings individuals together to share experiences on a professional and personal level and provides leadership on the advancement of philanthropic strategies for public health emergencies and racial injustice. The Foundation's president and CEO serves as the chair of the board of directors.

Information about our Community Benefits Program are made available via the [Company](#) and the [Foundation's](#) websites. Both the [Company](#) and the [Foundation](#) widely distribute and publicize annual reports.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

Our Community Benefits Program is part of an ongoing commitment to the community that extends beyond a one-year timeframe. In 2022, we contributed more than \$13 million to nearly 500 not-for-profits in financial, pro bono and in-kind support.

	FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS	PRO-BONO/IN-KIND	TOTAL INVESTMENT
The Company	\$7,864,373	\$1,527,621	\$9,391,994
The Foundation	\$3,708,478	n/a	\$3,708,478
Combined	\$11,572,851	\$1,527,621	\$13,100,472

This report focuses on three impact areas: chronic disease, mental health/substance use disorder, and access to health care. **Collectively, Blue Cross and the Foundation provided \$11 million in financial contributions in direct support of these impact areas.**

CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION

Due to longstanding, systemic racial inequities, historically marginalized populations are at increased risk for chronic disease outcomes such as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.⁶ We are committed to eliminating health inequities among our members and the community through an ambitious and comprehensive strategy aimed at developing solutions to the root causes of inequities:

- As part of our core operations, clinical and quality improvement teams are collecting critical member data and working with provider networks to address inequities in care.
- The Foundation is leveraging its research expertise, charitable grants, and advocacy programs to illuminate and address these issues across the Massachusetts health system.
- Through our corporate citizenship program, we are expanding the aperture to address specific social factors that influence health outcomes, including food, environmental and racial justice.

FOOD JUSTICE

Promoting access to healthy food has long been a pillar of our community support. Individuals and families across the Commonwealth, particularly in low-income communities and communities of color, struggle to get access to affordable, healthy food options. A 2020 Feeding America report showed Massachusetts experienced the greatest percentage increase in food insecurity in the country due to the pandemic.⁷ More recently, the Greater Boston Food Bank released its 2022 Statewide Food Equity and Access report that evaluates the state of food insecurity, equity, and access to nutrition programs in Massachusetts. The survey found continued elevated levels of food insecurity exacerbated by the high cost of living. Survey results included:

- 1.8 million adults in Massachusetts, or 33% of the state's population, reported chronic food insecurity with one in three individuals reporting running out of food or not having enough money to purchase food every month.
- One in three households in Massachusetts experienced child-level food insecurity, meaning that a child was hungry, skipped a meal or did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food. Children from LGBTQIA+, Black, or Hispanic households had higher rates of food insecurity than rates overall.
- Regionally, food insecurity varied greatly across Massachusetts, with 29% of households in Eastern Massachusetts — the largest population in the state — experiencing food insecurity. Among households

⁶ Shaw KM, Theis KA, Self-Brown S, Roblin DW, Barker L. 2013. *Chronic Disease Disparities by County Economic Status and Metropolitan Classification, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*. Prev Chronic Dis 2016;13:160088. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd13.160088>external icon. (Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2016/16_0088.htm).

⁷ Feeding America. (2020). *The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity in 2020*. (Retrieved from: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/coronavirus-hunger-research>)

with children, the prevalence of child-level food insecurity is 43% in Western Massachusetts, 41% in Central Massachusetts, and 32% in Eastern Massachusetts⁸.

We are working with community members across Massachusetts to increase access to culturally relevant foods and reduce food insecurity by building innovative, sustainable food systems in the following ways:

- Executed year five of our signature **Dot Rx** partnership, based out of Codman Square Health Center. We amplified the leadership of peer coaches, Dorchester residents who share their own personal health journeys. This leadership and their contributions to the program design and offerings were key to the program surpassing enrollment goals and connecting over 125 families to healthy and affordable food, gym memberships, free swim lessons, and outdoor activities.
- Supported **About Fresh – Fresh Truck and Fresh Connect programs** with a two-year grant to improve access to fresh, affordable food in Boston (2021-2022). The Fresh Truck mobile market program addresses short-term food needs in Boston and long-term food system equity by bringing affordable, healthy, and culturally relevant food to Boston communities. Key outputs included 51,953 transactions at Fresh Truck Mobil Markets, 46 pop-up mobile markets to raise awareness and get fresh food to more people in neighborhoods outside of regular scheduled mobile markets, and an e-commerce platform that fulfilled more than 12,000 pre-orders at an average of \$441.85 per order. Fresh Connect is an innovative food access solution that uses prepaid debit card technology to cover the cost of healthy food and measure impact. In Massachusetts, 12 health care systems and community organizations used Fresh Connect to improve food security for patients and families. Nationally, Fresh Connect distributed 3,885 Fresh Connect cards to newly enrolled cardholders who spent more than \$1.6 million on fresh fruits and vegetables, and added 41 new retailers, totaling 438 retailer locations that accept Fresh Connect debit cards.
- Partnered with **The Trustees** to enable its **Mobile Market program** to provide under-resourced communities with a reliable source of healthy local produce at an affordable price. The Mobile Market carries a wide variety of vegetables locally sourced from Massachusetts farms and makes weekly stops in Boston, Chelsea, and Revere – neighborhoods in which both incomes and supermarket sales are low – indicative of economic and geographic barriers to healthy foods. These same neighborhoods also experience some of the city's highest levels of diet-related disease, including obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension. The Mobile Market offers weekly orders to subscribers who use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Healthy Incentives Program benefits, with an average of 350 shares distributed per month from mid-June through the end of January. In addition, The Trustees Mobile Market offers home delivery orders to food-insecure households that do not qualify for benefits.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Health is directly linked to the physical environment, and some communities carry a disproportionate environmental burden (e.g., hosting the region's industrial and transportation hubs) that is associated with health disparities. We partnered with organizations that are improving environmental conditions and environmental infrastructure and promoting equitable access to the built and natural environment in the following ways:

- Launched a new multifaceted, two-year **Health Justice Partnership and Grant Program** based on feedback from the not-for-profit community on health inequities. In 2022, the program awarded \$770,000 in financial and pro bono support to seven environmental justice not-for-profits working to

⁸ Greater Boston Food Bank Third Annual Statewide Report: Opportunities to improve Food Equity and Access in Massachusetts: Ending Hunger Together, May 2023.

address the disproportionate impact of pollution and environmental degradation on historically marginalized communities. Refer to Appendix D for a list of partners.

- Sponsored year five of the **Bluebikes** public bike share program, a safe, healthy, and accessible alternative mode of transportation for communities throughout Metro Boston and beyond. The Bluebikes program operates in Arlington, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Newton, Revere, Salem, Somerville, and Watertown. We prioritized expansion in under-resourced communities, contributed towards the system's income-eligible program, and sponsored numerous free ride days to encourage ridership, including but not limited to Mental Health Month, World Car Free Day, and during the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority shutdown of the orange line. In 2022, the Bluebikes system logged more than three million trips and engaged more than 23,000 members, expanded to Malden and Medford (resulting in six new stations and 36 new bikes), and increased the existing program in Salem. Since we took over as the premier sponsor in 2018, the bike share program has expanded from 1,500 bikes in four municipalities to over 4,500 bikes in 13 cities and towns across Eastern Massachusetts.
- Supported key business community partners to develop region-specific priorities addressing climate resilience:
 - Hosted the **Boston Green Ribbon Commission's** annual fall meeting, bringing together leaders from across sectors to engage in interactive break-out rooms tasked with brainstorming solutions for Boston's climate resilience. Blue Cross' president and chief executive officer is a member of the commission.
 - Partnered with The Trustees to support the **One Waterfront Initiative**, a collaboration to advance bold, innovative, and iconic open spaces on Boston's waterfront that support the needs and accessibility of a diverse community and provide solutions to Boston's climate resiliency goals. Blue Cross' president and chief executive officer is a member of the One Waterfront CEO Roundtable.
- Promoted equitable access to greenspace by partnering with key municipalities and not-for-profits to provide free programming in easily accessible public spaces for all to enjoy.
 - Launched sole statewide partnership with the **National Fitness Campaign** (NFC) to expand free, equitable access to outdoor exercise in communities across Massachusetts. Through the partnership, we worked with local towns, institutions, and organizations to construct world-class, digitally activated outdoor Fitness Courts® designed for adults of all ages and abilities in easily accessible public and communal gathering spaces. There are currently fitness courts in Everett, Chelmsford, Gardner, Malden, Lee, and Wakefield, and 12 additional planned launches in 2023. In 2022, there were 2,100 estimated active users across Massachusetts, translating to an estimated 13 million calories burned, and 3,000 pounds burned.
 - Provided flagship sponsorship for year-round, free outdoor, indoor, and virtual group exercise classes in partnership with not-for-profit organizations in Greater Boston, Worcester, and Lowell, promoting a sense of neighborhood and connection at parks across the state.
 - **Boston Parks and Recreation Department Park Active Initiative:** A year-long fitness series that offers a variety of free, in-person classes in local parks across the city and virtual workouts for every age and fitness ability.
 - **Esplanade Association Frost Fitness Series:** A six-week series of classes hosted by Lynx Fitness Club, the November Project, 261 Fearless, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to offer cardio, interval and strength

training workouts, and winter walks to get Commonwealth residents moving. The 2022 program engaged more than 400 participants in 13 classes.

- **The Greenway Fitness Series:** A program that offered free fitness classes across the park every Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with additional classes on select Fridays and Sundays. Offerings included yoga, cardio dance, strength and conditioning circuits, and parkour workouts. The 2022 program engaged 14 partners and 1,117 participants in 81 offerings at 114 scheduled classes.
- **Worcester's Office of Health and Human Services and YWCA Summer Fitness in the Parks:** A 14-week series that promotes health and well-being programs at 12 city parks in communities of color with the goal of creating a healthier Worcester by providing opportunities to engage in healthy eating, active living, and community building. Staff surveyed community members to create community-informed, culturally relevant classes, including boot camps, self-defense classes, Zumba, basketball, flag football, Caribbean and hip-hop dance, and Latin salsa. With support from students at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, program managers measured program impact and provided recommendations on how to continue to make the program inclusive and representative of Worcester's diverse communities.
- Created an internal **Climate and Humanitarian Disaster Task Force** in response to the increase in frequency and intensity of natural disasters. The task force monitors natural disasters and provides community support as needed, including funding for community partners providing on-the-ground response with the potential for employee contributions, corporate match and/or corporate contributions, in-kind drives for essential items, and volunteer participation from employees. In 2022, our disaster response strategy included a two-year commitment ranging from \$10,000-\$20,000 per year to four disaster relief organizations: Team Rubicon, Americares, Center for Disaster Philanthropy, and Global Empowerment Mission. Employees also contributed \$27,000 to these partner organizations in response to the crisis in Ukraine (with the company match, the total community contribution reached more than \$50,000) and two employees were recruited and trained to serve as Grey Shirt volunteers for Team Rubicon's first response efforts locally, nationally, and internationally.

RACIAL JUSTICE

We are committed to recognizing the community and social context in which individuals live, work, and play and addressing injustices that contribute to disparate health outcomes in communities across the state. We supported innovative not-for-profits working to eliminate systemic, institutional, and interpersonal racism in the following ways:

- Partnered with the **Institute for Healthcare Improvement** to administer \$25 million in grants to targeted provider groups to support equity improvement efforts that address **racial and ethnic inequities in care** throughout the Commonwealth. We supported 16 provider groups through our Equity Action Community, tackling identified areas of improvement for each organization. Thus far, these provider groups spent nearly 50 hours participating in workshops and learning sessions, as well as over 200 hours of coaching. Areas of equity improvement efforts supported through this work include improving data infrastructure, staff trainings, and improving patient-facing clinical interventions to improve diabetes care, hypertension management, breast and colorectal cancer screening and prevention, and well child visits. In addition, five provider groups signed on to Pay for Equity, an innovative financial payment model rewarding health systems and physicians for eliminating racial and ethnic inequities in care across measures, including cancer screening, hypertension, diabetes care, and child and adolescent visits. Together, these five groups provide care to 53% of Blue Cross' in-state members.

- Supported year three of a four-year one million dollar commitment to The **New Commonwealth Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund** (2020–2023). Founded in 2020 by a coalition of 19 prominent Massachusetts Black and Brown business executives, the fund provides essential support, resources, and thought leadership to uncover and dismantle systemic racism across Massachusetts. The fund utilizes trust-based grantmaking and culturally relevant capacity building to foster an ecosystem that supports robust racial equity and social justice outcomes. Areas of focus include identity and culture narrative, youth development, policing and criminal justice reform, health equity, and economic empowerment.
- Supported the **Health Equity Compact**, a coalition of more than 30 Black and Latinx leaders across a diverse set of Massachusetts health organizations, including hospitals, health centers, payers, academic institutions, and public health. The compact leverages its collective voice in two ways: advocating for key policy priorities and principles that should serve as the foundation for health equity as the next chapter in health reform and supporting its members in prioritizing and advancing health equity within their organizations more effectively.
- Awarded a two-year grant to support the **Community Coalition for Equity in Research**, which works to build community voice and considerations for health equity into clinical research and strengthen community-academic relationships throughout Massachusetts (2022–2023). The coalition was launched in 2021 with seed funding from Blue Cross to serve as a source for high-quality community input on research proposals and protocols, as well as a trusted communication channel between researchers and community stakeholders. Comprised of community members who are trained in the basic principles of clinical research, the coalition provides guidance to clinical researchers on ways to design clinical trials that would increase equity and community interest in participation and address barriers to participation. This addresses a key need as clinical trials are typically designed and implemented by researchers with limited experience in community-engaged research, as well as limited understanding of the issues associated with research in under-resourced communities.
- Partnered with the **Private Industry Council** to provide summer employment to Boston public high school students. This program helps businesses develop a diverse pipeline of new talent and helps Boston area students gain access to career opportunities and higher incomes. In 2022, we supported not-for-profits with funding to build organizational capacity, while offering valuable community and job experience to Boston high school students. In total, \$200,000 was provided to six not-for-profits to employ 80 student interns during the summer months.
- The Foundation engaged in initiatives including:
 - Continued funding for the two-year **Racial Justice in Health grant program**. Grants went to six grassroots organizations led by people of color to strengthen the groups' capacity and expertise in health and health care advocacy. The program also provides technical assistance and peer learning for organizations interested in dismantling institutional and structural racism in health and health care delivery. Organizations engage community members, build grassroots power, and develop campaigns, strategic partnerships, and policy advocacy to improve the health care experience in Massachusetts for communities of color. Key outputs included a [series of videos](#) highlighting five grant partners and their work to define health equity through community action, and English and Spanish accessible meetings and communications via simultaneous written and oral translation. The grant program is also supported by the [Rx Foundation](#) and the [CareQuest Institute for Oral Health](#). The program will culminate in meaningful participation in a racial justice in health advocacy or community engagement campaign.
 - Awarded **Special Initiatives Grants** to not-for-profits seeking to positively impact health or health care access for Massachusetts community members who are economically, socially, culturally, or racially marginalized. Some of these included:

- **East Boston Neighborhood Health Center** will develop and pilot a culturally adapted health education and nutrition intervention program to improve rates of controlled blood pressure for economically marginalized Latinos with hypertension in East Boston. The pilot will help the center assess the feasibility and effectiveness of this approach and identify ways to improve the program, such as adapting the program to a virtual format.
- **Ellie Fund** will increase access to clinical trials for high-risk cancer patients who are low-income and people of color and would not otherwise have access to cutting-edge treatments. The fund is partnering with leading researchers and oncologists to change the landscape of clinical trials by addressing patient-facing barriers and ensuring they do not exclude low-income communities and people of color. The fund will evaluate the success of these measures in increasing participation among patients of color and the ability of patients to adhere to and complete treatment because of the fund's services.
- **Massachusetts Health Quality Partners** will partner with community leaders from the Chinese, Indian, and Vietnamese communities in Massachusetts to better understand factors related to Asian patients reporting lower patient experience scores compared to other populations. The organization will develop a report and propose recommendations to improve Asian subpopulation patient care experiences. Recommendations will include ways to improve access to quality care and mitigate or eliminate health care disparities.
- **The Health Equity Compact** will conduct 20–24 stakeholder interviews with leaders from state and municipal agencies, health care provider organizations, health insurers, employers, unions, and advocacy groups. These interviews will help the compact better understand health equity-related interests, priorities, work, and desires for change at the state level. The interviews will assess reactions to the policy proposals currently being formulated by the compact. The compact will then develop a report on stakeholder perspectives on the health equity policy proposals.
- The Foundation also supported 10 not-for-profits supporting individuals and families arriving in Massachusetts amid a recent influx received a collective investment of \$250,000. These organizations have extensive experience **assisting immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants** and will help connect new residents to resources and services for their health care needs in communities across the Commonwealth.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

Social isolation, economic uncertainty, and mounting stress are spurring exponential rises in mental health challenges and substance use disorder. According to data released by Blue Cross in May 2021, the use of outpatient services, including psychotherapy, increased nearly 20% during the pandemic⁹. In June 2023, updated data showed annual spending on mental health services for Blue Cross members doubled since the start of the pandemic with mental health and substance use disorders affecting 24% of Blue Cross members.¹⁰ A Foundation report showed that more than one in three (35%) Massachusetts adults ages 19 and older reported needing mental health care for themselves or a close relative over the past 12 months. The same report

⁹ [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Releases New Data on Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Claims During COVID-19 Pandemic. May 6, 2021.](#)

¹⁰ <https://newsroom.bluecrossma.com/2023-06-05-BLUE-CROSS-BLUE-SHIELD-OF-MASSACHUSETTS-SPENDING-ON-MENTAL-HEALTH-SERVICES-DOUBLED-SINCE-START-OF-PANDEMIC>

found that more than a quarter (27%) of Massachusetts adults reported needing mental health care for themselves over the past 12 months, with the level of need disproportionately high among younger adults ages 19–39, adults who identify as a race or ethnicity other than non-Hispanic white, and adults with lower family incomes¹¹. More recently, the United States surgeon general released a 2023 advisory calling attention to a public health crisis of loneliness, isolation and lack of connection in the U.S., citing the effect on mental, physical, and societal health, and noting a lack of connection can increase the risk for premature death to levels comparable to smoking daily.¹² Meanwhile, according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, opioid-related overdose deaths decreased in 2022 with approximately 25 fewer deaths than in 2021.¹³

Responding to the data and need, we reaffirm our long-standing commitment to mental health and are an innovator at the state and national level. As a health plan, we provide confidential and convenient support, tools, and services to help our members manage stressors, build resilience, and improve emotional well-being. We also share concerns about the critical nationwide shortage of mental health providers and are acting in a spirit of shared responsibility to address this problem and increase access to mental health services across the state.

The following is a sample of mental health activities and programs that we support:

- Expanded our multifaceted approach to address inequities and meet the mental health needs of our members, providers, and the broader community through:
 - Integration of clinical care management and advocacy team to connect members with the care they need.
 - Engagement of members, providers, and the broader mental health community to integrate medical and mental health care.
 - Operation of the largest network in Massachusetts with more than 18,000 in-network mental health practitioners, including child psychiatrists, providers who treat obsessive compulsive disorder, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and those experiencing serious mental illness, trauma, and substance use disorders.
 - Elimination of barriers to prior authorization for outpatient mental health services and for members seen in the emergency department, who need transfer to inpatient psychiatric or substance use programs.
 - Reimbursement of video and phone telehealth sessions performed by mental health specialist at the same rate as in-person visits.
 - Primary care physicians that receive new financial incentives for integrating mental health care into their practices with the goal of improving physical and mental health outcomes.
- As a founding member, provided sustained supported for **RIZE Massachusetts Foundation**, a statewide organization dedicated solely to funding and creating solutions to end the overdose crisis. Guided by those with lived experience, RIZE builds networks, designs programming, and supports community partners that are using novel approaches to preventing overdose and increasing access to treatment. In 2022 RIZE awarded approximately \$160,000 to 34 not-for-profits through their Frontline Funds grant program. RIZE programs seek to increase access to services and treatment, address inequity in the delivery of care, reduce stigma associated with substance use disorder, and enhance the social services workforce to best meet the needs of individuals they serve.
- Awarded a two-year grant to support the **Can We Talk: Community Conversations on Trauma & Healing** series created by the Reverend Liz Walker, former pastor of Roxbury Presbyterian Church

¹¹ [Behavioral Health During the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Update on Need and Access in Massachusetts 2020/2021, February 8, 2022.](#)

¹² <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/03/new-surgeon-general-advisory-raises-alarm-about-devastating-impact-epidemic-loneliness-isolation-united-states.html>

¹³ <https://www.mass.gov/news/massachusetts-opioid-related-overdose-death-rate-declines-15-percent-in-the-first-nine-months-of-2022>

(2021–2022). Can We Talk is a spiritually inspired, community-based, and clinically supported program that offers a safe and sacred space for the sharing of painful stories while increasing awareness and understanding of trauma, providing relief from traumatic stress, and delivering mental health services. While licensed mental health clinicals are available during each session, community champions who experienced trauma themselves complete a multi-hour training on trauma and healing which empowers and equips them to support their community.

- Executed a year-long partnership with Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce to deliver a six-part **Future of Work** series to share information and resources with the business community through multiple platforms. Offering expert, timely perspectives, the series explored how business and government can and should innovate and lead with agility and empathy to support a vibrant, diverse global workforce and marketplace. A session on mental health in the workplace, held during Mental Health Awareness Month, focused on the role employers can play in supporting their employees' mental health. Participants were encouraged to "test" the mental health benefits of physical activity with Bluebikes free ride promotions during National Mental Health Month and Mindful Mondays.
- The Foundation engaged in initiatives including:
 - Published new data from a survey commissioned to gather information on the need for and access to mental health and substance use care among Massachusetts adults ages 19 and older and their close relatives. Entitled ***Behavioral Health During the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Update on Need and Access in Massachusetts 2020/2021***, the study included a series of questions focused explicitly on the link between the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for behavioral health care. Key findings included:
 - More than one in three adults reported needing behavioral health care for themselves or a family member over the prior 12 months.
 - 39% of adults who identify as a race or ethnicity other than non-Hispanic White report a need for behavioral health care, versus 22% for non-Hispanic White adults.
 - 49% of respondents reported job losses or disruptions during the pandemic and 28% said they consumed alcohol or cannabis more frequently after the pandemic began.
 - 26% of those who reported needing behavioral health care did not receive any and more than one in three anticipated a need for behavioral health care for themselves and/or a close relative in the future.
 - Continued to explore and propose solutions to the behavioral health workforce crisis in two publications:
 - ***Creating a Robust, Diverse, and Resilient Behavioral Health Workforce in Massachusetts*** outlines seven concrete recommendations to expand Massachusetts' behavioral health workforce, increase its diversity, maximize its potential to meet the needs of all people in the Commonwealth, and strengthen its resilience. The report was informed by a literature review, the development of an inventory of promising models nationwide, and interviews with local and national stakeholders and experts.
 - ***Help for the Front Line: Approaches to Behavioral Health Consultation for Primary Care Providers*** studies whether primary care providers (PCPs) identify a need for a PCP-to-behavioral health provider consultation program for adult patients with mental health conditions and substance use disorders, and whether they would utilize such a program. Additionally, the study sought to understand the type of behavioral health conditions providers encounter, the proportion of adult primary care patients with behavioral health needs, and the challenges PCPs face in supporting adult patients with behavioral health conditions. These findings are intended to help stakeholders understand how a consultation program might be best structured to provide evidence-based support to PCPs and, in turn, their patients with behavioral health needs.

- Invested over \$850,000 in the first of a multiyear grant program to improve access to community-based mental health services for adults experiencing mild to moderate mental health distress and practical problems of daily living. **Advancing Community-Driven Mental Health** awarded grants to five community-based organizations and two technical assistance partners to adapt and implement a community-based, low-intensity psychological intervention known as Problem Management Plus, which was developed by the World Health Organization to address mental health treatment gaps in low- and middle-income countries. Under this program, staff members of community-based organizations will be equipped to deliver mental health support in the community by teaching basic concepts and skills that enable individuals to address and deal with issues of immediate concern to them. The grant program also funds **The Family Van** and **Partners In Health** to provide training, technical assistance, coaching and implementation support to the seven organizations. An evaluation of the program is being conducted by the Institute for Community Health.
- Supported efforts to improve access to behavioral health through responsive grantmaking. Six community-based organizations were awarded a total of \$300,000 to pilot and implement programs and strategies to provide behavioral health services and support for specific populations including children, older adults of color raising grandchildren, women who are the relatives and caregivers of perpetrators of community violence, and Ukrainian and Afghan refugees resettled in Hampden County.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Many people face barriers that prevent or limit access to needed health care, which increases the risk of poor health outcomes and health inequities. These barriers include, but are not limited to, a lack of availability of health care, transportation to care, culturally and linguistically appropriate care, and health insurance coverage.

The following is a sample of the health care access activities and programs that we support:

- Invested more than \$400,000 in 30 **community health centers** to help further their efforts to provide quality, affordable health care to diverse and under-resourced communities. Community health centers provide primary, preventive, and dental care, as well as mental health, substance use disorder and other community-based services to anyone in need, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. In Massachusetts, 52 community health center organizations provide high-quality health care to more than one million state residents at more than 300 sites statewide.
- Provided grants totaling \$260,000 to **Health Care for All**, a not-for-profit organization that seeks to make quality, affordable health care accessible to everyone, regardless of income, social or economic status. The funding was used to support the organization's initiatives, including:
 - Ensure maximum enrollment in existing coverage programs, successful transition to new coverage programs, and retention of coverage for families and individuals.
 - Reduce cost, improve quality and transparency, and preserve public program eligibility, benefits, and affordability for all consumers.
 - Advance and monitor updates to the Massachusetts health care payment and delivery system.
 - Educate, empower, and equip health care consumers to participate in health reform dialogues alongside insurers, health care providers and health coverage purchasers.
 - Sustain operating support for the 950 enrollment assisters staffing the Health Care for All HelpLine, which handled 21,431 calls in 5 languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and French), and helped process 1,507 benefit applications for 3,441 people, who were awarded 2,306 benefits.
 - Provide real-time feedback to policymakers and help decisionmakers obtain the information they need to institute strategic program, technology, and infrastructure improvements in areas such as mental and oral health care.

- Supported key business community partners, such as **Associated Industries of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Business Roundtable, Boston Municipal Research Bureau, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, and Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation** to develop both region-specific and statewide policy priorities to protect Massachusetts employers in the provision of affordable health care coverage to their employees, as they seek to balance quality, access, and affordability for the Commonwealth's workforce. Blue Cross partners with organizations representing a wide range of employers to ensure business community voices of all sizes and types are heard in the health care debate. With the heightened urgency brought about by the health care workforce crisis, we are working closely with these organizations to develop collaborative and innovative partnerships and strategies to address this critical issue.
 - Partnered with **Associated Industries of Massachusetts** to advance its efforts to manage the cost of and increase access to health care. Blue Cross is a key advisor as the organization focuses on containing health care costs by addressing the excessive market power held by certain large providers; giving consumers better information with which to make health care decisions; and preventing new health care mandates that lack commensurate value.
 - Provided support and expertise to **the Massachusetts Business Roundtable's** cross-segment task forces, specifically in the areas of:
 - **Health care and life sciences:** Worked towards a health care system that ensures access to quality health care, increases equity, and promotes access to digital care.
 - **Diversity, equity, and inclusion:** Fostered authentic conversations among participating business leaders, developed DEI awareness, and created an action plan to guide DEI engagement.
 - **Energy and environment:** Supported efforts to provide reliable, sustainable, and affordable energy resources for consumers and businesses, enabling the state to meet the needs of a growing economy, while addressing climate change in a way that also supports environmental justice issues.
 - Supported the **Boston Municipal Research Bureau**, which provides expert research, independent analysis, and trusted findings on Boston's most critical fiscal and policy matters. Research and recommendations, including those related to health care, lead to sound policies, new laws and important city management improvements. Blue Cross's vice president of citizenship and public affairs serves on board of directors.
 - Provided leadership to the **Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Health Care and Life Sciences Leadership Council**, which works with business and government leaders to engage in efforts to find health care cost solutions and preserve the region's leadership roles in the areas of care quality, research, and innovation. Nearly one-in-five workers in Massachusetts are employed directly in the health care sector and tens of thousands more are indirectly employed in jobs that provide legal, financial, technological, administrative, and other support. Blue Cross' vice president of government and regulatory affairs serves as chair of the council.
- Continued to be a principal founder and primary funder of the **Massachusetts Coalition on Serious Illness Care** activities, including funding the positions for the executive director, deputy director, and other support staff, and providing significant in-kind communications, management and convening resources. The coalition is led by an advisory board that includes Andrew Dreyfus, former president and chief executive officer of Blue Cross; Maureen Bisognano, former president and chief executive officer of the Institute for Health Care Improvement; and Michael Curry, president and chief executive officer of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers. The coalition consists of more than 125 Massachusetts organizations that are working to ensure that everybody gets the care that matters to them throughout their lives, especially if they are seriously ill. Major activities included:

- Disseminated research findings exploring the health care experiences of people with serious illness and their caregivers, especially in communities of color, through presentations, speaking engagements and academic publications.
 - Hosted a free virtual summit convening the serious illness care community, and several additional webinars for the public.
 - Convened a collaborative of the four Massachusetts medical schools, and a parallel collaborative for Massachusetts nursing schools, to jointly improve the training students receive on serious illness communication skills.
 - Initiated a pilot program in partnership with Commonwealth Care Alliance, and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center to address the need to match volunteers with patients in need of a health care agent.
 - Led an advisory group for the statewide infrastructure for digital capture, storage, and retrieval of advance care planning documents in partnership with the Department of Public Health and Executive Office of Elder Affairs. We provided significant financial support for this initiative and helped the state secure matching funding for the new registry from the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- The Foundation engaged in initiatives including:
 - Awarded **Transhealth Northampton** a \$50,000 Special Initiatives grant to develop a pilot program to examine the effectiveness of a consulting model for gender-affirming care. This program will expand access by educating and supporting providers. Under this model, the provider can reach out to Transhealth for a provider-to-provider consultation to ask specific questions about patient care. In addition to individual consultations, Transhealth will create training and educational toolkits to expand the project's reach by contacting local primary care offices, medical groups, community health centers, and other local organizations to encourage participation and educate them about the program.
 - Produced 11 **publications** designed to educate stakeholders on aspects of access to care, including the impact of federal policies on the state's Medicaid program, MassHealth, changes to the MassHealth program, and health reform priorities for the next state administration to tackle.
 - Provided analysis of the impact of federal policies on coverage and access for Massachusetts residents. [Health Care in the ARPA Bill: Selected Highlights from Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021](#) summarized the key components of Chapter 102 that will affect health and health care in Massachusetts, while [Expanded Coverage and Savings: Effects in Massachusetts of Extending the American Rescue Plan Act's Enhanced Marketplace Subsidies](#) provided an analysis of the impacts of the enhanced premium subsidies for purchasing health insurance through the Marketplace, or Health Connector in Massachusetts, that the American Rescue Plan Act temporarily authorized through 2022.
 - Released annual update to the **MassHealth: The Basics—Facts and Trends** chart pack. As part of the release, the Foundation's Massachusetts Medicaid Policy Institute hosted a webinar with chart pack authors from the Commonwealth Medicine Division at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School that was attended by over 200 participants. The goal of the webinar was to provide participants with basic background information about MassHealth, including what benefits MassHealth covers, who it serves, program spending, and a status update on the state's delivery reform efforts. Many organizations, including governmental agencies, use the annual webinar to train staff and demystify the MassHealth system.
 - Published the [MassHealth Proposed Demonstration Extension 2022–2027: Building on Success, Focusing on Equity](#) report, which describes the proposed MassHealth

Demonstration extension, what it means for MassHealth coverage moving forward, and implications for members, providers and other stakeholders. While this request largely aims to continue and improve upon the programs and initiatives that are a part of the current demonstration, an area of specific focus within the proposed extension centers around advancing health equity within the MassHealth program.

- Published the [End of the Federal Continuous Coverage Requirement in MassHealth: Key Strategies for Reducing Coverage Loss](#) issue brief, which aims to educate stakeholders and policymakers about an upcoming federal policy change that could affect coverage for many MassHealth members. Like all states, Massachusetts received enhanced federal Medicaid funding under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the first major federal stimulus package passed by Congress in response to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. As a condition of receiving these funds, Massachusetts was required to maintain continuous coverage in MassHealth during the federal COVID-19 public health emergency. When the public health emergency ends, MassHealth will resume its standard renewal, or “redetermination,” processes. As MassHealth begins to redetermine eligibility for a considerable volume of its members, there is a high risk that some individuals who remain eligible will experience a loss in coverage. This brief includes a summary of MassHealth’s eligibility and enrollment approach and describes additional strategies that MassHealth and other stakeholders can take to ensure that people who remain eligible stay covered.
- In partnership with Manatt Health, solicited perspectives on health reform priorities from a broad and diverse group of health care stakeholders, including consumer, provider, health plan, business, and labor representatives. The results were published in a report entitled [A Focus on Health Care: Five Key Priorities for the Next Administration](#), and presented in December 2022 to over 170 key stakeholders at an in-person event, which also featured a panel discussion on the identified priority issues and potential policy solutions. The report synthesized the findings from stakeholder interviews, describing five health care priorities for the new governor and legislative leaders to immediately pursue: addressing systemic racism and inequities in health, ensuring consumer affordability of health care; confronting the mental health crisis for children and youth; improving the affordability of and access to long-term services and supports; and solving severe health care workforce shortages, particularly in the paraprofessional long-term services and supports and behavioral health workforce.
- Trained 13 journalists through the Foundation’s **Health Coverage Fellowship**, which is designed to help newspaper, radio, television and online reporters and editors do a better job covering critical health care issues. Over a nine-day period, more than 80 speakers participated in sessions, including top health officials, policy experts and researchers.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING – VOLUNTEERISM – CLIMATE AND HEALTH RESILIENCE

In addition to the community-focused programmatic work detailed previously, **employee volunteerism**; **diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging**; and **climate and health resilience** serve as internal levers to build a healthy and just community for all.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

We recognize the value of all voices and attribute inclusivity and employee wellbeing as central facets to success. We implemented programs and initiatives that make our workplace and business practices more diverse, equitable and inclusive, including:

- Advanced our **Supplier Diversity Program**, a program for businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities that focuses on procurement, engagement activities,

and supplier development trainings. We invested \$54 million with diverse businesses, finishing the year at 13% of overall procurement spend, exceeding our goal of 12%. This program has received multiple awards, including the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Pacesetters Company of the Year and the Center for Women and Enterprise Partner of the Year.

- Launched a **Spanish-language version of [Coverage](#)** to advance language accessibility across new audiences including members, employers, providers, and community partners. *Coverage*, Blue Cross' first-in-market health news service, features original health news reporting and photojournalism on issues of critical interest to consumers, employers, community leaders and policymakers.
- Uplifted 10 inclusive and diverse **Employee Resource Groups**: Asian Blue Community, AZULatinx, Black Professionals Network, Blue Pride, Chronic Conditions and Caregivers, Empowering Abilities, Vets, Women's Inclusion Network, Women In Tech, and the Working Parents Network. The groups represent more than 35% of employees and are employee-driven and sponsored by executive leadership. They advance our diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging strategy through the "Five C's" model: care, culture, career, community, and commerce. The groups create awareness and promotion of internal mobility efforts, participate in volunteer opportunities, and contribute to benefits policies and business ideas. They also promote employee wellbeing in a hybrid and remote work environment by creating safe, inclusive, and relevant programming, especially during periods of broader civic challenges.
- **Invested more than \$100,000 in 33 not-for-profits supporting people with disabilities** and engaged in community efforts to promote and evolve disability awareness, acceptance, and inclusion programs. To drive innovation, productivity, and growth in today's economy, institutions must design workplaces and community spaces where every individual can participate fully and meaningfully, including people with disabilities. Research reveals that companies who embrace best practices for employing and supporting people with disabilities outperform their peers in the marketplace. Key activities include:
 - Our director of contract operations and president of the Empowering Abilities employee resource group serves on the following commissions: **Massachusetts Future of Work Commission, Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination Advisory Board, and Disability Rights Advisory Committee.**
 - Named one of the **Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion** for continuous efforts to create a safe and inclusive workplace for employees of all abilities and received a perfect score on the annual **Disability Equality Index**, which measures culture and leadership, enterprise-wide access, employment practices, community engagement, and supplier diversity.
 - The Foundation supported the Disability Policy Consortium and the Boston Center for Independent Living by providing operating support to advocacy organizations that are mobilizing communities to affect policy. Together, those two organizations co-chair the **Disability Advocates Advancing our Health Care Rights Coalition**. The coalition, which comprises over 30 disability, elder and health care organizations, is a mission-driven alliance working to promote policies that improve health care access and better outcomes for people with disabilities. Formed in 2012, the coalition, has focused on shaping One Care, the managed care program for people who are eligible for both MassHealth and Medicare. The coalition strengthens the consumer voice, ensuring that people with disabilities have a primary role in decisions about the health care systems that impact their lives.

VOLUNTEERISM

Our employees are our greatest asset. We are proud to offer a wide range of volunteer programs that enable employees to contribute their skills, resources, and passion to the community. With an increasingly hybrid workforce, our employees appreciate the value of mission-driven programs to connect with colleagues, recharge, and serve the community. In 2022, 81% of our employees (up 5% from the year prior) participated in

community-focused programs, resulting in 18,646 hours of volunteer service in 299 service projects (50% virtual, 50% in person). These hours represent a monetary contribution of \$1.5 million in volunteer and in-kind support.

Signature programs include:

- **Innovative employee volunteer programs** help build community and connection among employees, reinforce the culture of service, and provide valuable support for not-for-profit partners:
 - As part of our new hire onboarding process, we introduced new employees to a culture of service through a 30-minute, in-home, virtual volunteer experience with the Happy Hope Factory, a not-for-profit that brings happiness to hospitalized children with special needs or chronic and life-threatening illnesses by providing Happy Hope Bags filled with hours of activities to help to take a child's mind off of their treatment or illness.
 - In partnership with employee resource groups, we offered service events that align with each group's respective affinity month. For example, members from the Women Inclusion Network packaged post-maternity hygiene products and handmade baby blankets for teenage mothers at Dimock Center's My Sister's House live-in treatment facility in celebration of Women's History month.
- **Service Day** brought together 3,000 employees to partner with more than 70 not-for-profits in 90 meaningful in-person and virtual volunteer projects. Volunteers supported projects focused on creating more equitable, just, and healthy communities across Massachusetts, including painting foursquare courts in New Bedford with Playworks, harvesting produce in North Grafton with Community Harvest Project, creating survival paracord bracelets for active military with Operation Gratitude, and building nature play areas in Mattapan at the Boston Nature Center. Since Service Day's inception in 2011, we have contributed more than \$11 million to the community through this annual volunteer day. Refer to Appendix E for a full list of Service Day partners.
- **Skills-based volunteering** provides pro bono support to a network of Health Justice partners. During spring and fall skills-based sessions, 53 employees engaged in tailored pro bono service projects that resulted in a sustainable impact for the following partners: About Fresh, Boston Community Pediatrics, Community Servings, Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, Eastie Farm, Parents for Peace, Shine Initiative, and Urban Farming Institute. Employees also engaged in a longer-term skills-based project with one of our 2021 Racial Equity and Justice Grant recipients, Legendary Legacies, helping to reimagine how the organization manages, measures and reports on data. The project culminated with employees vetting and selecting a new data management platform. We then provided \$20,000 in additional funding to support the platform's implementation.
- **Not-for-profit board program** reflects the importance of civic leadership at the highest levels of the company. In 2022, 74% of our senior leaders served on a community board, contributing their knowledge and expertise, galvanizing external stakeholders, driving fundraising, and helping to build networks. Collectively, our employees provided guidance, raised visibility, and strengthened 82 not-for-profit organizations through board governance, an estimated value of more than \$640,000.
- **GenUnity**, a not-for-profit focused on building the next generation of community leaders, offers a unique immersive, three-month civic leadership program focused on health equity, and brought together community members with lived experience, not-for-profit staff, and business professionals, including three of our employees, to foster solidarity and address the systemic inequities that create barriers to health for people of color and marginalized communities. In honor of our former president and CEO's commitment to community engagement and diversity, equity, and inclusion, we also partnered with GenUnity to launch the Andrew Dreyfus Community Fellowship, a leadership accelerator that will foster the growth and impact of GenUnity's program graduates. With our funding, the new fellowship will provide graduates, including participating employees, with access to additional seed funding, community-building events, and direct connections to a pipeline of community and civic leaders to help implement their plans to drive lasting change in communities across greater Boston.

- **BlueCrew Bucks program** is a new incentive program that recognizes and celebrates employees who volunteer outside of the annual Service Day by rewarding employees with \$25 per volunteer hour served (up to \$500 each year) to donate to the not-for-profit(s) of their choice. In 2022, more than 1,000 employees allocated nearly \$70,000 to the organizations and causes they were most passionate about.
- **YouGiveBlue campaign** gives Blue Cross employees the chance to double their impact through a company match. In 2022, employees raised more than \$764,000 for U.S.-based not-for-profits, exceeding the previous year's results for the sixth year in a row. With the company match, the total community contribution reached more than \$1.5 million.
- **Donation drives** help support community partners and the clients they serve during the holidays. In 2022, More than 1,000 employees donated 1,851 items – nearly 150% more than last year. Toys and gifts were sent to the Wonderfund in support of 150 children in foster care, more than 19 boxes of hats and gloves for unhoused community members were contributed to the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, gifts for more than 80 seniors were sent to South Shore Elder Services, and winter clothing and essential care items for Operation Gratitude were shipped to deployed military service men and women.

CLIMATE AND HEALTH RESILIENCE

We recognize that personal health and the health of communities are intricately linked to the health of the environment. Our business practices are guided by a commitment to responsible environmental stewardship. Our physical, operational, financial, and investment policies are designed to have a positive social and environmental impact, especially in diverse and under-resourced local communities. We also support the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and align business operations and community partnerships to improve public health and sustainable development. As a Massachusetts-based health plan, our work most closely aligns with the following SDG goals: zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, and climate action.

Building on our decade long commitment to environmental health, we announced ambitious, new **climate action goals**: carbon neutral and zero waste by 2030. These goals will drive improvements in operations and our work with civic and not-for-profit leaders to accelerate environmental justice throughout Massachusetts. To guide this integrated environmental health leadership and progress towards the 2030 goals, we developed three key focus areas:

- **Reduce environmental impact:** Since 2010, we have reduced electricity use by 58%, waste by 76%, and paper by 85%. We are now focused on improving our greenhouse gas emissions accounting, further reducing corporate emissions, and examining how to transfer established environmental sustainability practices into employees' remote work locations, including developing educational materials for in-home energy, waste, and chemical exposure reduction.
- **Catalyze environmental justice:** For decades, low-income, immigrant and communities of color across Massachusetts have been overburdened by air pollution from power plants, congested highways and industrial facilities. We partner with local not-for-profits to champion environmental justice and eliminate the environmental conditions that lead to poor health outcomes.
- **Educate and empower:** Recognizing that the climate crisis is a health crisis, we provide education and tools to help community members understand the connections between health and the environment, and empower stakeholders to create healthier environments for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Key programs and initiatives include:

- Provided \$300,000 to support heating assistance and bolster local safety nets for Massachusetts communities during winter 2022–2023 when home heating costs were projected to be significantly higher for all heating fuel sources. The funds were distributed to more than 20 not-for-profit

organizations that provide fuel assistance, including direct cash to families and individuals who may not be eligible for federal and state energy funds. Supported organizations included Action for Boston Community Development, Berkshire Community Action Opportunity Council, Boy and Girls Club of Holyoke, Citizens for Citizens, Community Action Pioneer Valley, Community Teamwork, East Boston Social Centers, Heading Home, [Interfaith Social Services \(Homesafe\)](#), Old Colony YMCA, People Acting in Community Endeavors, Pine Street Inn, Salvation Army (Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund), Self-Help, Inc., South Shore Community Action Council, Springfield Partners for Community Action, St. Francis House, The Boston Foundation (Food, Fuel & Shelter Fund), West End House, and Worcester Community Action Council.

- Engaged employees in leading sustainability and environmental health projects:
 - Produced more than 1,000 pounds of local, organic produce through an innovative partnership with The Trustees and **company gardens** at our Hingham and Quincy offices. Gardeners rallied to respond to the high rate of food insecurity in communities by donating their harvest to the South Shore Food Pantry and Interfaith Social Services. To engage the remote workforce, we hosted virtual gardening workshops about sustainable gardening skills, such as trellising, container gardening, and home composting that employees could apply in their own home gardens.
 - Developed new **climate and health resilience education and programming** modules on the connections between the environment, individuals, communities, and public health. Several employee resource groups, employer customers, and external sustainability groups participated in the company-sponsored *Environmental Justice 101: Past, Present and Future module*, which provides awareness about historical environmental injustice, the interconnectedness between systemic racism and environmental degradation and pollution, and the need to foster environmental stewardship that uplifts historically marginalized groups. Additionally, we hosted hands-on learning engagements about harmful chemicals found in consumer products and ways to mitigate their exposure, including recipes for clean and simple household cleaners.

CLOSING

At Blue Cross, we care deeply about doing our part to create an equitable, just, and healthy Commonwealth. This commitment inspires our associates, supports the communities where our members live and work, and is true to our founding nearly 90 years ago. We are grateful for our community partners for their ongoing guidance and collaboration, and to the Attorney General's Office for this opportunity to share the highlights of our work in 2022.

NEXT REPORTING YEAR

We expect the 2023 Community Benefits Annual Report to continue to focus on chronic disease, mental health/substance use disorder, and access to health care while addressing specific health justice factors that influence health outcomes. We expect investments in the community will align with previous years.

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APPENDIX A. CHNAS AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH SUPPORTING DATA

Hospital or Associated Entity and Report Title	Year	Area Served	Priority Needs and Populations Identified	Associated CHIP and Priority Areas Identified
<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health</p> <p>Massachusetts State Health Assessment</p>	2017	Massachusetts	<p>Priority Needs: Maternal, Infant, and Child Health; Environmental Health; Infectious Disease; Injury and Violence Prevention; Addiction; Health Systems and Health Care Access; Wellness and Chronic Disease</p> <p>Priority Population: Elderly, youth, poor and immigrant communities</p>	<p>Not in 2017; most recent from 2014</p> <p>Active Living, Healthy Eating, and Tobacco-Free Living; Chronic Disease Prevention and Control; Infectious Disease Prevention and Control; Substance Abuse Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Recovery; Injury, Suicide, and Violence Prevention; Maternal, Child, and Family Health Promotion; Environmental Risk Factors and Health</p>
<p>Boston CHNA-CHIP Collaborative</p> <p>Boston CHNA-CHIP Collaborative 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment</p>	2019	Boston	<p>Priority Needs: Employment and Workforce; Education; Food Insecurity; Housing; Transportation; Chronic Disease; Mental Health; Substance Use; Violence and Trauma; Maternal and Child Health; Environmental Health; Health Care Access</p> <p>Priority Population: n/a</p>	<p>In process</p> <p>Housing; Access to Services; Financial Security and Mobility; Behavioral Health</p>
<p>Lawrence General Hospital</p> <p>Lawrence General Hospital 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment</p>	2019	Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover, Boxford, Georgetown, Haverhill, Middleton	<p>Priority Needs: Chronic Disease; Aging Population; Behavioral Health; Health Care Access</p> <p>Priority Population: Youth, homeless, immigrant communities</p>	None found
<p>Lowell General Hospital</p> <p>Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessment</p>	2019	Lowell, Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, Westford	<p>Priority Needs: Behavioral Health; Cancer; Chronic Disease</p> <p>Priority Population: n/a</p>	<p>2020 in process; most recent from 2017</p> <p>Access to Healthy Food; Asthma; Mental Health; Physical Activity; Social Determinants of Health; Substance Use and Prevention</p>
<p>Cape Cod Healthcare</p> <p>Cape Cod Healthcare Community Health Needs Assessment Report and Implementation Plan 2020-2022</p>	2020	Barnstable County	<p>Priority Needs: Housing; Transportation; Seasonal Economy and Employment Variation; Behavioral Health; Aging Population; Physical Health Conditions; Health Care Access</p> <p>Priority Population: Seniors and youth</p>	<p>Yes (same report)</p> <p>Physical Health Conditions; Behavioral Health; Transportation; Housing; Workforce Development</p>
<p>Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital- Plymouth</p> <p>Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital- Plymouth Community Health Needs Assessment</p>	2019	Plymouth, Duxbury, Kingston, Carver	<p>Priority Needs: Mental Health and Substance Use; Chronic/Complex Conditions and their Risk Factors; Social Determinants of Health and Access to Care</p> <p>Priority Population: Youth and families; Older adults; Low-to-Moderate Income Individuals and Families; Individuals with Chronic/Complex Conditions</p>	<p>Yes (included as appendix of report)</p> <p>Same as CHNA</p>
<p>Martha's Vineyard Hospital</p> <p>FY2019 Community Health Needs Assessment</p>	2019	Martha's Vineyard	<p>Priority Needs: Quality and Affordable Housing; Access to Care and Coordination of Services; Behavioral Health; Aging-Related Services</p> <p>Priority Population: n/a</p>	In process

Hospital or Associated Entity and Report Title	Year	Area Served	Priority Needs and Populations Identified	Associated CHIP and Priority Areas Identified
Baystate Medical Center 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment	2019	Hampden County	Priority Needs: Social environment; Housing needs; Access to transportation, healthy food and places to exercise; Lack of resources to meet basic needs; Educational attainment; Violence; Environmental exposures; Insurance and health care related challenges; Limited availability of providers; Need for culturally sensitive care; Lack of transportation; Lack of care coordination; Health literacy, language barriers; Mental Health and substance use disorders; Chronic health conditions; Physical activity and nutrition; Infant and perinatal health; Sexual health; Alzheimer's disease Priority Population: Children and youth; older adults; Latinos; Blacks; LGBTQ+	None found
Baystate Franklin Medical Center 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment	2019	Franklin County	Priority Needs: Social environment; Housing needs; Access to transportation, healthy food and places to exercise, and broadband; Lack of resources to meet basic needs; Educational attainment; Violence and trauma; Limited availability of providers; Lack of care coordination; Insurance and health care related challenges; Need for increased cultural humility; Need for transportation; Health literacy and language barriers; Mental health and substance use disorders; Chronic health conditions; Infant and perinatal health Priority Population: Residents with incomes below 300% of federal poverty level; Black and Latino residents; LGBTQ+ Youth; People re-entering community after incarceration; Transgender, non-binary, or gender nonconforming people; children who have experienced trauma; older adults	None found
Berkshire Health Systems Berkshire County Community Health Needs Assessment	2018	Berkshire County	Priority Needs: Clinical Care; Health Behaviors; Morbidity and Mortality; Physical Environment; Social Economic Priority Population: n/a	None found
City of Worcester Division of Public Health; Fallon Health; UMass Memorial Medical Center 2018 Greater Worcester Regional Community Health Assessment	2018	Grafton, Holden, Leicester, Millbury, Shrewsbury, West Boylston, and Worcester	Priority Needs: Mental Health; Substance Use; Social Determinants of Health; Chronic/complex Conditions and their Risk Factors Priority Population: Vulnerable children and families; youth and adolescents; immigrants and non-English speakers; racial/ethnic minorities & others facing discrimination; homeless and unstably housed; older adults	2016 Racism & Discrimination; Substance Use; Access to Care; Mental Health; Economic Opportunity; Cultural Responsiveness; Access to Healthy Food; Physical Activity; Safety

Massachusetts Health Council 2017 Preventable Conditions and Social Determinants of Health: Access to and consumption of nutritious foods are important determinants of health. While Massachusetts fares better than

the rest of the country, a sizable portion of the state's population experiences food insecurity. The level of food insecurity varies by region. There are also disparities in the consumption of healthy foods, across racial and ethnic groups, education levels, and gender. About three-quarters of a million people in Massachusetts were food-insecure in 2014. Suffolk (15.9%), Bristol (12.1%), and Hampden (11.7%) counties reported food insecurity rates higher than the statewide rate of 11.1%.

Children's HealthWatch and The Greater Boston Food Bank *Massachusetts Cost of Hunger*: Food insecurity costs the state of Massachusetts at least \$2.4 billion dollars per year. Despite nearly nine years of economic recovery, 1 out of every 10 households in Massachusetts still lacks the resources necessary to afford enough food for all household members to live active, healthy lives. In 2016, \$2.4 billion was spent in health care, special education, and lost work time costs connected to food insecurity. Of the \$2.4 billion, about \$1.9 billion were direct and indirect health-related costs, and special education accounted for \$520 million in expenditures.

Commonwealth Magazine *Gateway Cities Discover the Power of Food*: Over a 12-month period, more than \$4 million in incentives were paid through the Massachusetts Healthy Incentive Program, known as HIP, which reimburses SNAP recipients for the amount they spend at farmers markets, from \$40 to \$80 a month depending on family size. Attendance at farmers markets surged in response to the funding, which also provided a major boom to growers.

U.S. Department of Agriculture: 40 million Americans live in households that don't always have enough food for everyone in the family. Working-age adults who often go without enough food are at least 40% more likely to suffer from long-term health problems.

The Boston Public Health Commission *2016-2017 Health of Boston*: Personal health behaviors contribute to a person's risk for disease and to one's overall quality of life and well-being. Behaviors such as smoking, excessive alcohol use, and intake of excess calories including sugar-sweetened beverages, contribute to cancers, obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, and premature death. Conversely, physical activity and fruit and vegetable intake are protective against each one of those poor health outcomes.

The United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley *2017 Community Survey*: The number one unmet need facing the state of Massachusetts is affordable housing with drugs and substance use disorder coming in second, followed closely by access to physical and mental health care. Key findings also indicate that 41% of respondents worry about the ability for families to survive despite the high cost of living.

The Foundation *Leveraging the Social Determinants of Health: What Works?*: Greater attention to the social determinants of health may both improve Americans' health and reduce health care costs. Research suggests that of the factors that determine one's health, 20% is attributed to genetics, 20% is attributed to health care, and 60% is attributed to social, environmental and behavioral factors. Increased investment in partnerships between health care and social services can offer health benefits and reduce health care costs for targeted populations.

Blue Cross Blue Shield *Health Index*: The index identifies health conditions with the greatest impact and how the level of health impact of these conditions is influenced by social determinants of health such as socioeconomic conditions, level of education, community health behaviors and local health system characteristics. Additionally, the index provides county-level health indicators and allows for the objective measurement of specific health conditions that drive overall health in each county. The top ten most impactful conditions on the population health of Massachusetts are major depression, hypertension, high cholesterol, coronary artery disease, alcohol use disorder, psychotic disorder, substance use disorder, type II diabetes, Crohn's disease, and hyperactivity related conditions.

Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity *Grantmaking with a Social Justice Lens*: The daily practice of using a racial equity lens in social change as well as in grantmaking has established a baseline understanding of structural racism, and it has also produced new insights, definitions, mistakes, and nuances.

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's *Understanding Health Conditions Across the U.S.*: Moody's Analytics used data collected through the aforementioned Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Index, to compile a report that identified health conditions and how they are influenced by social determinants of health. Physical health conditions, mental health conditions and unique health conditions are crucial for understanding variations in community health and assessing which conditions, are likely to contribute to poor health. Physical health conditions (high cholesterol, coronary artery disease, hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and diabetes) are strongly associated with overall health and have a larger adverse effect on population health in places with socioeconomic, demographic, and behavioral challenges. In contrast, mental health conditions (hyperactivity and depression/ anxiety/affective disorder) are more likely to have large effects in counties that have fewer socioeconomic, demographic and behavioral challenges. Finally, unique conditions (breast cancer, lung cancer, and substance abuse disorder) do not fit into either of these categories as a result of the unique ways they influence health.

Office of the Attorney General *Building Toward Racial Justice and Equity in Health: A Call to Action*: the data on racial and ethnic health care disparities in Massachusetts paint a bleak picture. In general, residents of color are less healthy and die younger than white residents. These disparities are long-standing and pervasive. While gaps between white populations and communities of color have been narrowed, there are still significant racial disparities in health outcomes in communities across the state. COVID-19 has amplified and worsened these inequities. The evidence on the disparate effects of COVID-19 provides a somber reminder of the health care system's failure to equitably serve the Commonwealth's most under-resourced residents.

Massachusetts Health Council *Common Health for the Commonwealth: Report on Social Determinants of Health, Selected Health Conditions and Injuries and Risk and Protective Factors 2021*. Massachusetts is one of the healthiest states in the nation. Five major killers lost potency in Massachusetts in the decade from 2007 to 2017 – cancer, heart disease, stroke, Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and motor vehicle collisions. And yet, overall indicators of health tell a different story about the direction in which Massachusetts is heading. Life expectancy typically increases over time, but it fell three times during that decade in Massachusetts. So-called deaths of despair — deaths due to overdose, alcohol, and suicide — share a large portion of blame. During the decade, opioid overdose deaths rose 210 percent; alcohol-induced deaths rose 35 percent; and death by suicide rose 23 percent. The age-adjusted mortality rate for opioid overdose now exceeds that for stroke.

APPENDIX B. CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP STRATEGY

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Accelerating advances in health justice through a dual track program. All participants in the Accelerator receive funding, training + facilitation, pro bono support + networking opportunities.

• TRACK 1: The Collaborative

- Multi-year funding, training, facilitation and pro bono support to jump-start a new idea or scale an existing model
- Multiple (typically up to 5) organizations are invited to convene around a promising idea or model in a specific community

• TRACK 2: The Network + Grants

- Multi-year funding, training, and pro bono support
- Individual organizations apply for operating support



INVESTMENTS, ENGAGEMENT + ACTIVISM

Leveraging our financial investments and volunteer resources to support organizations that are focused on health justice.

- Volunteer support from our employees including Service Day, Skills-Based Volunteering and BlueCrew projects
- Investments to not-for-profits to support health justice programming
- Strategic collaborations in towns across the state focused on addressing unique community health challenges
- Internal sustainability and wellness efforts

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & CONVENINGS

Driving change by convening stake-holders and sharing insights and promising practices around health justice innovation

- Convenings in communities across MA on important health topics
- Advocacy work supporting health advancements

CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMMING



APPENDIX C. BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION

Established in 2001 with an initial endowment from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross), the mission of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation (the Foundation) is to ensure equitable access to health care for all those in the Commonwealth who are economically, racially, culturally, or socially marginalized. The Foundation, led by its President & CEO and separately governed by its own board of directors, supports the expansion of health care access through research, policy work, learning communities and grants to community organizations. Since it was established, the Foundation has invested more than \$77 million in grants to the community. Its publications serve as vital resources for policymakers and health care organizations across the state and country, and it regularly convenes leaders for information dissemination and impartial and thoughtful public discussion. Since 2020, the key focus areas of the Foundation have been promoting access to coverage and care, expanding access to behavioral health services and addressing structural racism and racial inequities in health.

<p style="text-align: center;">ADVANCING COMMUNITY-DRIVEN MENTAL HEALTH \$855,779</p> <p>Provides three-year grants to improve access to community-based mental health services for adults experiencing mild to moderate mental health distress and practical problems of daily living.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHENING THE VOICE FOR ACCESS \$729,300</p> <p>Provides two-year general operating grants to Massachusetts organizations to strengthen community-based policy activities, increase citizen participation in public policy development and promote collaboration among statewide policy and advocacy organizations on two key priorities for marginalized populations: ensuring health care coverage and addressing health care affordability.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONNECTING CONSUMERS TO COVERAGE \$603,000</p> <p>Provides one-year grants to Massachusetts not-for-profits to support health insurance enrollment and community-centered outreach efforts to connect individuals to health insurance, with a focus on communities with a higher rate of uninsurance, a higher number of individuals that lack insurance, or that are more likely to experience gaps in coverage.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RACIAL JUSTICE IN HEALTH \$300,000</p> <p>Provides two years of funding for people of color-led, grassroots organizations to strengthen their capacity and expertise in health and health care advocacy.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">POLICY & RESEARCH \$85,000</p> <p>Provides awards to projects that align with the Foundation's strategic focus areas in support of its the policy and research agenda .</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SPECIAL INITIATIVES \$880,769</p> <p>Provides one-year grants for projects which empower communities to advance health equity at the community level. Projects should positively impact the health or health care related needs of MA residents who have been economically, socially, culturally, or racially marginalized. Activities align with at least one of the Foundation's strategic priorities.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CATALYST FUND \$254,630</p> <p>Provides one-year, non-renewable grants to help community-based organizations strengthen their capacity to expand access to health care in Massachusetts.</p>	

APPENDIX D. HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP AND GRANT PROGRAM PARTNERS

ACE (Alternatives for Community and Environment)

Empowering communities of color and low-income communities across Massachusetts to eradicate environmental racism and classism, create healthy, sustainable communities and achieve environmental justice.

Browning the Green Space

Facilitating a just energy transition for Black and Brown people in the Massachusetts clean energy sector and beyond by creating jobs, building wealth, and reducing energy burden in communities of color.

GreenRoots

Enhancing the urban environment and public health in Chelsea and East Boston through collective action, unity, education and youth leadership across neighborhoods and communities.

Groundwork Southcoast

Developing Resilience Zones in Fall River and New Bedford by pairing food access, nature-based solutions, and environmental justice community engagement to reduce heat islands, manage stormwater, and increase fresh food access for a more sustainable and resilient community.

Lynn Community Health Center

Reducing the environmental impact of the Lynn Community Health Center, enhancing its climate resilience, and improving environmental health disparities to serve as a model for other community health centers.

Speak for the Trees

Increasing the size and health of Boston's urban tree cover to mitigate the negative health impact of heat islands and air pollution in underserved and under-canopied neighborhoods.

The Greenway & Asian Community Development Corporation

Developing strategies targeting heat resilience in Chinatown, one of Boston's most densely populated neighborhoods, which suffers from the worst air quality in Massachusetts.

APPENDIX E. 2022 SERVICE DAY PARTNERS

Organization	Project Description
About Fresh	5 volunteers advised About Fresh around data security best practices and staff training recommendations to ensure that their Fresh Connect program is HIPAA-compliant and safe from phishing threats.
Annie's Kindness Blankets	100 volunteers created blankets to donate to community members experiencing substance abuse or mourning the loss of a loved one.
Applause Academy Massachusetts	20 volunteers helped to make the performing arts accessible to Applause Academy's diverse community of children by organizing and repairing props, sets, and costumes and painting and decorating the dance studio.
Backyard Growers	25 volunteers weeded mulched and cleared pathways in an urban garden to help provide healthy, fresh food to low- to moderate-income residents of Gloucester, including many immigrant and refugee families.
Birthday Wishes	20 volunteers brought the joy and magic of a birthday party to the homeless children and families that Birthday Wishes serves, by wrapping birthday gifts and filling Birthdays-in-a-Box.
Boston Harbor Now	50 volunteers ferried to Peddocks Island to help ensure this beautiful environment remains a vibrant, public space – now and for future generations – by cleaning beaches, tracking collected trash, and clearing trails.
Boston Home	25 volunteers hosted an Adaptive Sports and Recreation Day for Boston Home residents and outpatients that will provide them the special opportunity to bowl, play bocce, and participate in target games using assistive technology and adaptive devices.
Boston Nature Center	25 volunteers built nature play areas that provide children with more ways to connect with nature by encouraging self-directed, informal play.
Boston SCORES	12 volunteers planted shrubbery & bushes around the outside perimeter of the Boys & Girls Club, creating a welcoming space for the 2,500+ youth served every year.
Boys and Girls Club of Lowell	10 volunteers created activity kits to ensure club members will have access to their favorite programming while the Club is undergoing construction.
Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston	25 volunteers provided a safe and welcoming space for Club members by helping clean the kitchen, prep a healthy meal, landscape the front entry, and clean up the playground and baseball field.
Broadmeadow Brook	10 volunteers built a fence to define the property line.
Cardinal Cushing Academy	20 volunteers brought the gift of fresh air and outdoor activity to Cardinal Cushing residents by helping clear walking trails around their campus.
Carepacks	20 volunteers packed care packages for deployed military containing high-calorie food products, socks and t-shirts, personal care items, books, magazines, and more.
Catholic Charities	20 volunteers winterized Sunset Point Camp ensuring at-risk children can enjoy a fun summer of exploration and friendships for years to come.
Community Farms Outreach	15 volunteers performed farm field tasks that will help the farm deliver fresh produce to neighbors in need.
Community Harvest Project	25 volunteers participated in farm work that will allow CHP to donate food to over 20 hunger relief agencies in Central and Eastern MA.
Community Servings	50 volunteers prepared and packaged scratch made, medically tailored meals for Community Servings' 2,200+ weekly clients who are experiencing critical illness.
Cradles to Crayons	150 volunteers helped sort, package and label gently used clothing and books to distribute to children in need across Massachusetts.
Crossroads	50 volunteers helped close the campgrounds for the season and prepping the site for fall and winter events.
Dimock Center, The	20 volunteers revamped the backyard of a residential house for women in recovery and their children to enjoy.
Dream Day on Cape Cod	25 volunteers helped to close the facilities for the season to ensure that seriously ill children and their families will have a safe a welcoming environment next summer.
East Boston Neighborhood Health Center	5 volunteers created a roadmap for East Boston Neighborhood Health Center to improve staff and provider knowledge of and engagement with community-based healing practices.
Eastie Farm	5 volunteers developed a budget framework and recommendations for implementation for Eastie Farm that helps them to track their revenue, expenses, grants, and salary costs more efficiently.
Esplanade Association, The	25 volunteers beautified the Esplanade by picking up trash and litter from the fields, gardens, and water edges of the park.
Father's Uplift	20 volunteers packed "Bags for Dads" duffels filled with supplies and resources to help dads experiencing re-entry from incarceration ease their transition and remind them that they have a support system that cares.
Food for Free	15 volunteers packed "Just Eats" grocery boxes that provide over 3,000 Boston area families in need approximately twenty-five pounds of produce and pantry staples.
Food Project, The	25 volunteers made locally grown, healthy food more accessible to low-income families and people of color in Greater Boston by weeding, mulching, harvesting, and washing vegetables.
Friends of Holly Hill Farm	20 volunteers harvested produce to distribute to local food pantries, preparing garden beds for fall plantings and helping to compost at the farm.
Good Sports	15 volunteers sorted brand-new sporting equipment, apparel, and footwear at Good Sports warehouse to distribute to communities in need.
GreenRoots	20 volunteers improved the community garden by taking down beds, piling and dispersing wood chips, and shoveling compost.
Happy Hope Foundation	250 volunteers created Happy Hope Kits with coloring sheets and fun activities that will bring a smile and a bit of fun to hospitalized children.

Organization	Project Description
Holbrook Food Pantry	12 volunteers painted the interior of the Holbrook Food Pantry, so clients are welcomed into an inviting and dignified space.
Home For Little Wanderers	20 volunteers restored a peace pond and garden that provide a quiet place to sit and relax in nature for adolescent youth involved with the Department of Children and Families.
Hope Floats Healing and Wellness Center	30 volunteers helped to set up and prepare for Hope Floats' annual Memory Walk that will provide a space for grieving families to come together and honor the lives of those lost.
Hull lifesaving Museum	50 volunteers painted the fleet of boats and cleaning the museum space and repairing the museum's wheelchair accessible ramp.
Jewish Family Services MetroWest	20 volunteers supported Framingham's immigrant community by helping JFS staff sort, package and load seasonal children's clothing that will be distributed to families in need.
JoinedForces	20 volunteers repaired the home of a veteran by performing basic home repairs and enhancements.
Kind Hearts for Kids	15 volunteers assembled kindness kits and decorating the office space where foster children come for visits.
Letters Against Isolation	300 volunteers wrote handwritten notes to isolated seniors that will provide joy and encouragement.
Magical Moon	50 volunteers created a magical space for children with cancer to escape and be a kid by helping revamp the Garden of Hope, Fairy Nook, and Hobbit House.
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless	20 volunteers built beds for homeless children that will provide a safe refuge and sense of security.
Massachusetts Military & Cape Cod Military Support Foundation	75 volunteers wrapped donated gifts for that families of veterans and active military during the holidays.
Merrimack Valley Food Bank	20 volunteers packed bags of nutritious food that will be distributed to students who rely on school meals for food through the weekend.
Mystic River Watershed	25 volunteers removed litter from parks and paths that will reduce the amount of trash that ends up in the Mystic River and protect local wildlife.
Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH)	25 volunteers assembled emergency survival kits and replacing three garden beds.
Old Colony YMCA - Plymouth	50 volunteers installed a water bottle filling station and planting a rain garden to prevent erosion near their beach to make Camp Clark more sustainable.
Old Colony YMCA - East Bridgewater	15 volunteers created a "sensory house" with a variety of sensory stations to promote social play, communication, and motor skill development.
Old Colony YMCA - Middleboro	25 volunteers installed a water wall, an outdoor abacus, and a site word wall to ensure campers do not fall victim to the "summer slide" by providing fun, active learning opportunities in the Y's new "Poolside Classroom."
Old Colony YMCA - Stoughton	25 volunteers created a sensory playground for campers at Camp Christina to encourage open-ended play and stimulate creative thinking.
Operation Gratitude	200 volunteers made paracord survival bracelets and writing letters to provide military members and first responders with a tangible, lasting expression of gratitude.
Parents For Peace	5 volunteers assessed Parents for Peace marketing and communications assets and developing messaging recommendations for educating and informing mental health providers on the services the organization offers to address radicalization and support families.
Peter Igo Park	20 volunteers improved the facilities at Peter Igo Park spreading new sand on the volleyball court, spreading woodchips, installing a slide in the kiddie area, planting flowers, and power washing the tennis and basketball courts.
Playworks	25 volunteers beautified the playground at Gomes Elementary School to create a safe and inclusive recess space, transform recess culture, and promote active lifestyles for students.
Project Just Because	50 volunteers sorted and packed donated clothes and essential items to prepare Project Just Because's move to a new facility.
Regional Environmental Council	10 volunteers built a fence that will protect the garden from animals and help increase their harvest to continue to provide healthier affordable, locally grown food for the Worcester community.
Room to Grow	14 volunteers are sorted and packed bundles of baby and toddler items for the families in need with children ages 0-3.
Salem Pantry, The	12 volunteers packed dry goods, frozen goods, and fresh produce to ensure the food pantry is equipped to provide meals for its 100-150 home delivery clients.
Save the Harbor Save the Bay	40 volunteers are cleaned up Malibu Beach in Savin Hill following the busy season and get it ready for the winter.
Shine Initiative, The	5 volunteers developed a newsletter template for the Shine Initiative that includes structure and content recommendations.
South Shore Stars	20 volunteers cleaned up the camp after a busy summer and readying it for winter.
St. Mary's Center for Women and Children	20 volunteers are beautified the residential spaces to ensure St. Mary's Center residents feel supported, empowered, and inspired.
Together We Rise	250 volunteers provided comfort, support, and happiness for kids in foster care by creating birthday kits, assembling STEM boxes, and building skateboards.
Trustees, The	25 volunteers prepared for the Trustees' annual Fall Festival, a family event that invites hundreds of people to the farm to play games, visit with barn animals, and enjoy the farm, volunteers will be helping with festival set up.
Urban Powerhouse	15 volunteers painted the new facility to ensure athletes and members can feel great about their community and training space.
VA Boston Healthcare System (Brockton VA)	30 volunteers planted vegetables in the indoor greenhouse used at the hospital's farm to table meal program.
West End House	20 volunteers created booths for its annual Fitness Carnival focusing on teaching youth healthy eating habits.
Weymouth Food Pantry	20 volunteers helped run a pop-up food pantry at Crossroads Worship Center that will distribute shelf stable foods and fresh fruits and vegetables to neighbors on the South Shore.

Organization	Project Description
Wonderfund	25 volunteers renovated family visiting rooms at the Southcentral DCF office using a trauma informed approach so children and families can have calming and productive visits.
YMCA Cape Cod	20 volunteers packaged shelf-stable meal bags, creating culturally relevant menu cards, and cleaning up the kitchen facility and community garden.
YMCA Greater Boston	40 volunteers repaired benches and picnic tables, painting indoor spaces, and cleaning up and organizing summer games at Camp Ponkapoag.
YMCA South Shore	20 volunteers harvested food at the YMCA's farm to donate to local food pantries.
YMCA Southcoast	25 volunteers cleaned up the campgrounds and trails, painting foursquare and hopscotch on the blacktop, painting, and assisting with light office projects.
YMCA Southcoast – Dartmouth / Sharing the Harvest	25 volunteers replaced the greenhouse coverings and planting strawberries and raspberries to provide these popular fruits to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity.
Zoo New England	50 volunteers revamped the Giraffe Entrance ensuring that it looks beautiful is a benefit to the surrounding community.