

## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ***Arkansas Blue Cross Foundation to award up to \$1 million to promote better health***

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (June 25, 2002)** — Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield has provided \$5 million to establish a charitable foundation to promote better health in Arkansas. The foundation is accepting its first grant applications through Sept. 16.

The Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas anticipates awarding up to \$1 million in grants in 2002 to non-profit or governmental organizations and programs that positively affect the health of Arkansans. Particular emphasis will be given to projects affecting health care delivery, health care policy and health care economics.

"We have a health care crisis in Arkansas that must be addressed," said Robert L. Shoptaw, chief executive officer of Arkansas Blue Cross and chairman of the foundation's board of directors.

"The poor health status of our citizens ranks 46th in the nation and contributes to rising medical costs. By providing funding and working together with other organizations, we hope to establish or expand a number of diverse health care projects that will benefit all Arkansans over the long term," Shoptaw said.

The Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas will accept proposals for its first grants through Sept. 16, with awards being announced by December 31. Foundation grants will be made to non-profit or governmental organizations only and not to individuals. In addition to these grants, Arkansas Blue Cross expects to continue its support of Arkansas charitable organizations through direct corporate contributions.

(more)

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A board of directors will govern the foundation and make the final selection of grant awards. The current board of directors includes: Sybil J. Hampton, president, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Little Rock; Hayes C. McClerkin, Of Counsel, Dunn, Nutter and Morgan, Texarkana; George K. Mitchell, M.D., Little Rock; and Robert L. Shoptaw. The foundation is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and serves the state of Arkansas. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization.

For information on how to apply for a grant, write to Blue & You Foundation, 601 S. Gaines Street, Little Rock, AR 72201 - or visit the foundation Web site at [www.BlueAndYouFoundationArkansas.org](http://www.BlueAndYouFoundationArkansas.org).