

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Blue & You Foundation* awards first grants to support health programs**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Nov. 5, 2002) — The board of directors of the *Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas* today announced its first annual grant awards to 12 recipients in an amount totaling \$962,100 to be used to support services to improve the health of Arkansans. The grant awards will be given in December for funding of 2003 programs.

Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield established the *Blue & You Foundation* in December 2001 as a charitable foundation to promote better health in Arkansas. The *Blue & You Foundation* will award grants annually to non-profit or governmental organizations and programs that positively affect the health of Arkansans. Particular emphasis is given to projects affecting health care delivery, health care policy and health care economics.

“This is the beginning of a new process that we hope over time will lead to a state of better health in Arkansas,” said Robert L. Shoptaw, chief executive officer of Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield and chairman of the foundation’s board of directors.

“Working together for better health is part of our mission at Arkansas Blue Cross. By working with other organizations and agencies who share this commitment, we believe we can have an even bigger impact on the health of Arkansans.”

The *Blue & You Foundation* grants for 2003 address several health conditions and issues throughout Arkansas, including prenatal care, cardiovascular care, asthma, cancer support, childhood obesity, the nursing shortage, fitness/nutrition and exercise education, safety, and long-term care research.

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Blue & You Foundation grants awarded for 2003 are:

American Heart Association (\$78,800) — to support “Operation Heartbeat,” which is a statewide acute event initiative to reduce death and disability from cardiovascular disease through identified community Cardiovascular Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) trainings. The AHA will collaborate with the Arkansas Emergency Medical Systems, Arkansas hospital systems, Arkansas Department of Public Health Department, the Arkansas Centers for Disease Control contact person, AHA training centers, more than 70 Arkansas corporations and seven public high schools to train the lay public in life-saving CPR with the goal of improving cardiac arrest survival.

American Lung Association of Arkansas (\$130,400) — to support the statewide “Arkansas Asthma Project,” which will provide asthma education programs to help asthmatic children gain management skills to control their disease, improve their academic performance, and reduce the number/severity of their asthma episodes. The goal is to teach asthma management to reduce the number of emergency room visits and hospital stays needed.

Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (\$150,000) — to support a statewide study to examine policy, program, financial and other access-related determinants of the use of cost-effective alternatives to institutional long-term care. The project will study utilization of home and community-based and institutional care among long-term care Medicaid beneficiaries. If the study results indicate a need for an educational intervention targeting providers, consumers and/or caregivers, an intervention will be developed.

Arkansas Post Girl Scout Council (\$7,000) — to support the Girl Scouts’ “Fit for the Future” project in the Pine Bluff area, which is designed to foster a positive approach to proper nutrition, exercise and good health habits. With the idea that good health promotes good self-esteem, girls will learn proper nutrition and fun exercise habits and be encouraged to share the information with family and friends. The council’s mission is to inspire girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism and service to become happy and resourceful citizens.

BAPTIST HEALTH Foundation (\$30,000) — to fund six nursing scholarships for graduates who wish to practice in the underserved areas of the Delta region of Arkansas. In collaboration with three hospitals in the Delta, the BAPTIST HEALTH School of Nursing provides faculty to conduct a 12-month Accelerated Program for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and Licensed Psychiatric Technical Nurses (LPTNs) to obtain their Registered Nurse (RN) diplomas. The RN program is conducted at the McGehee-Dermott campus of the Great Rivers Technical Institute, which draws students

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from a 12-county area including Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Chicot, Cleveland, Dallas, Desha, Drew, Jefferson, Lincoln, Ouachita and Union counties.

Bess Chisum Stephens YWCA (\$75,000) — to support EncorePlus, a Central Arkansas program designed to reduce the Arkansas mortality rate of breast and cervical cancer. Since 1996, the program has reached 35,000 medically underserved women statewide with cancer information and has helped 7,000 to access screening exams, diagnosis or treatment. The project improves health care delivery in Arkansas by linking low-income women to reduced-cost medical providers and sources of financial help for medical costs. It also increases women's access to medical care by giving barrier reduction services such as system navigation, transportation, advocacy, non-directive counseling and planning.

Boston Mountain Rural Health Center, Inc. (\$42,000) — to support the BMRHC's "Healthy Lifestyles" program, which provides nutrition education to individuals who seek weight control through gradual lifestyle changes, are committed to achieving self-management goals and follow-up evaluations. Building on its success in achieving positive diabetes patient outcomes, the grant will help enhance the program which serves persons in Searcy, Van Buren, Stone and Madison counties to improve the quality, longevity and overall health of those citizens and improve access to needed services.

Family Network, Inc. (\$98,000) — to support the Springdale "Health Education in Parenting" program, which is designed to improve the health of participating adults and children (birth to 5 years of age) in Northwest Arkansas through health education and access to affordable services. The program encourages its participants to practice healthy behaviors that lead to good health and prevent illness and disease. Mentoring, advocacy and collaboration with health providers directly are part of the program that affects the quality of services a family receives.

Guadalupe Prenatal Clinic (\$50,000) — to support the clinic (in its fifth year), which provides prenatal services to increasing numbers of immigrant Hispanic women in Central Arkansas who have limited resources for care. The clinic is a collaboration of St. Edward's Church in Little Rock, Arkansas Children's Hospital, the Arkansas Department of Health and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS). Regular prenatal care reduces poor pregnancy outcomes and complications.

KIDS FIRST (\$140,900) — to support the statewide "Childhood Obesity: Addressing the Arkansas Epidemic" program, which is designed to improve kids' health through early education and intervention. Based on the knowledge that obesity treatment is most successful when initiated in early childhood through an established

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multi-disciplinary approach, this program intervenes with pre-school children through increased awareness, early detection and prevention to provide long-term health improvements throughout life.

Safe Jonesboro Coalition (\$90,000) — to support the coalition's mission to protect the populations' most vulnerable citizens, the young and the old, by distributing child safety seats and bike helmets, and providing screenings and assessment to prevent falls among the elderly. This program reaches out to residents in Northeast Arkansas to provide bike safety education and distribute bike helmets; assess the elderly for high risk fall factors and educate them about fall prevention; and to provide child safety seats to parents in need.

UAMS/Delta Area Health Education Center (AHEC) (\$70,000) — to support the AHEC's "Your Body, Your Health" program designed to increase health knowledge and modify behavior patterns regarding hypertension, stroke, teen pregnancy, breast self-exams and sickle cell anemia. The project proposes to improve the health status and health care delivery of citizens in the Delta by creating systems that will empower rural Arkansas to become healthier citizens. This program is designed to educate and train laypersons to increase community awareness of health disparities, network with local health agencies and to increase quality of life in the Delta.

"We have a health care crisis in Arkansas that must be addressed," said Shoptaw. "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."

The *Blue & You Foundation* received 64 grant applications requesting more than \$5.5 million in support. The 2003 grant selections were made by the *Blue & You Foundation* board members, including: 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 Shoptaw.

The *Blue & You Foundation* will accept proposals for its 2004 funding cycle any time after Jan. 1, 2003. Grants will be accepted until late summer, reviewed and approved in the fall and awarded before the end of 2003 for 2004 programs. For more information or to receive a grant application, write to Blue & You Foundation, 601 S. Gaines Street, Little Rock, AR 72201 — or visit the foundation Web site at www.BlueAndYouFoundationArkansas.org.

The foundation is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield

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Association and serves the state of Arkansas. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Founded in 1948, Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is the largest health insurer in Arkansas, serving more than 860,000 Arkansans. One of its affiliates, USAble Life, is the largest group life insurer in the state, with more than \$9 billion in force. Arkansas Blue Cross and its USAble family of companies have more than 2,300 employees.

Arkansas Blue Cross and its affiliates provide health care financing for more than one-third of Arkansans. If combined, the 42 independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans constitute the nation's largest financier of health care, serving more than 80 million — more than one in four — Americans.