

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Blue & You Foundation* awards \$1 million in grants to support health programs**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Dec. 2, 2003) — The *Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas* today announced its second annual grant awards to 14 recipients in an amount totaling \$1,001,235 to be used to support services to improve the health of Arkansans. The grant awards will be given in December for funding of 2004 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* awards 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 another step in the 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 2004 address several health conditions and issues throughout Arkansas, including asthma, cancer support, nutrition and exercise education, oral health, prenatal care, substance abuse and safety.

Blue & You Foundation grants awarded for 2004 are:

American Lung Association of Arkansas (\$132,010) — to support the statewide “Arkansas Asthma Project,” which will provide asthma education programs to
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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 Addictions, Research, Education and Services (CARES) (\$90,000) — to support “Building Bridges,” a pilot program targeting families affected by a mother’s substance abuse. The program is designed to recognize reciprocal relationships among economic self-sufficiency, health care access, relapse prevention services and sustained health improvements. Arkansas CARES is a program of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Department of Psychiatry.

Arkansas Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention (\$90,000) — to support an educational program to reduce the occurrence of folate-preventable birth defects in Arkansas by increasing the knowledge and intake of folic acid among Arkansas women of childbearing age through public health education, postpartum patient education and health care provider education.

Bess Chisum Stephens YWCA (\$50,000) — to support EncorePlus, a Central Arkansas program designed to reduce the Arkansas mortality rate of breast and cervical cancer. 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.

Crowley’s Ridge Development Council, Inc. (\$7,775) — to support “CHOICES,” a program designed to reach kids who have experimented with drug use, specifically methamphetamine (meth), in an effort to prevent the progression of the addiction. CHOICES is an adolescent support group for youth ages 13-18 and focuses on early prevention/intervention to link troubled youths and troubled families with much-needed social support, counseling and health care services. Group activities are based on an educational approach to addiction and substance abuse with the goal of teaching teenagers how to make better choices.

Delta Memorial Hospital (\$95,000) — to launch a women’s health initiative entitled “Link to Life,” which will target women and newborns in Southeast Arkansas, focusing on education and connecting people with services. The program will address breast health, osteoporosis, prenatal and infant care.

Focus, Inc. (\$10,160) — to support the Northeast Arkansas Disability Health Education Conference to improve community-based care delivery by training paraprofessionals on how to work with people with certain developmental disabilities, specifically retardation, cerebral palsy, seizure disorder and/or autism. The conference will have a direct impact on health care delivery because it will improve the skills of direct care workers who serve people with developmental disabilities in Northeast Arkansas, and the professionals that supervise them. A properly trained staff will help

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ensure that people with disabilities receive safer, more respectful and more competent services.

Guadalupe Prenatal Clinic (\$50,000) — to support the clinic (in its sixth year), which provides low-cost 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.

Interfaith Clinic (\$25,000) — to support an oral health initiative for the low-income, uninsured and underinsured people of Union County, designed to improve the delivery of dental care services in South Arkansas. The clinic is a cooperative effort of the South Arkansas Regional Health Center, the Service League of El Dorado, Interfaith Help Services, the Union County Health Unit, Area Health Education Center, the Ministerial Alliance and local school districts. The scope of the initiative will include pain relief; oral health education consisting of educational videos, educational presentations to elementary school students, care packages and literature; preventive care consisting of assessments and cleaning visits; and the establishment of a local Oral Health Coalition.

KIDS FIRST/UAMS Department of Pediatrics (\$119,000) — to support the statewide "Childhood Obesity: Impacting 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 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. Due to increased demand for education, the grant will focus on a variety of activities to increase awareness, provide family lifestyle change information, and assist in the training of health and education personnel.

Kiwanis Activities, Inc. (\$75,000) — to support the development of a wellness program through the Joseph Pfeifer Kiwanis Camp for students in the Little Rock School District. The program will formalize an approach to teaching at-risk third-, fourth- and fifth-graders to live their lives more responsibly by understanding the importance and practice of nutrition, physical activity and fitness goal-setting. In addition to teaching students, the pilot program will train, support and evaluate the faculty and staff at an elementary school in Little Rock who will, in turn, maintain the program.

Northwest Arkansas Radiation Therapy Institute (NARTI) (\$70,750) — to support the Men's Healthcare Navigator Program for men with cancer. Modeled after the breast cancer Navigator Program for women, this program serves to direct men who are being treated for cancer through the health care system. The program offers support to the patient while trying to answer some of the most commonly asked questions about a

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cancer diagnosis, such as treatment options, support, information and resources. The Navigator Program will extend the work of NARTI's free prostate, skin and colorectal cancer screening clinics by providing needed support to men in Northwest Arkansas as they go through the phases of cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Safe Jonesboro Coalition (\$78,824) — to support the coalition's mission to protect the populations' most vulnerable citizens, the young and the elderly, 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.

University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service (\$107,716) — to support the "Arkansas Body Walk" program designed to teach healthy behaviors to Arkansas children, grades K-4, to help reduce the incidence of obesity and chronic disease resulting from poor eating habits, substance abuse and lack of physical exercise. The hands-on walk-through exhibit represents the human body and provides students an entertaining, experiential activity that teaches and reinforces the skills and choices for a healthier lifestyle. The goal is to reach 30,000 students in Arkansas in 2004.

"We have a health care crisis in Arkansas that must be addressed," said Shoptaw. "The poor health status of our citizens ranks 47th 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 77 grant applications requesting more than \$6.9 million in support. The 2004 grant selections were made by the *Blue & You Foundation* board members, including: Carolyn Blakely, Ph.D., dean of the Honors College, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff; Sybil J. Hampton, president, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Little Rock; Hayes C. McClerkin, Of Counsel, Dunn, Nutter and Morgan, Texarkana; Mahlon Maris, M.D., of Harrison; George K. Mitchell, M.D., of Little Rock; and Shoptaw.

The *Blue & You Foundation* will accept proposals for its 2005 funding cycle any time between Jan. 1 and Aug. 13, 2004. Grants then will be reviewed and approved in the fall and awarded before the end of 2004 for 2005 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.

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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.

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. Arkansas Blue Cross and its affiliates have more than 2,200 employees and serve approximately one-third of Arkansans. If combined, the 41 independent, locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans collectively provide health care coverage for 88.3 million people — nearly one-third of all Americans.