

BCBSA Announces Support for Individual Mandate Coupled with a Requirement for Insurers to Offer Coverage to All

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WASHINGTON – Scott P. Serota, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA), released the following statement:

"The nation's 39 Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies have been steadfast champions of comprehensive healthcare reform to assure all Americans have coverage, to rein in costs and to improve quality throughout the entire system. We are pleased that policymakers on both sides of the aisle are making healthcare reform a national priority.

"To assure truly meaningful reform, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) and the 39 member Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies today announced support for every individual being required to have coverage and all insurers being required to accept everyone regardless of their health status.

"Coupling a requirement that insurers must offer coverage to everyone regardless of health status with an effective requirement that everyone have insurance would enable insurers to offer coverage to everyone regardless of their health status -- without the unintended consequence of premium increases. With everyone covered through an effective individual mandate, insurance can function as intended and spread the risk over a broad and representative population and, thereby avoid the risk of only those who need insurance purchasing coverage.

"Our support for an individual mandate and a requirement for insurers to accept everyone builds upon BCBSA's comprehensive healthcare reform proposal, The Pathway to Covering America, and our goal to expand coverage to everyone. Our Pathway proposal would expand coverage, rein in costs, and improve quality through a wide range of initiatives such as fostering public/private partnerships; creating a national comparative effectiveness research institute; changing incentives to improve care; promoting health and wellness programs; and expanding the use of health information technology.

"BCBSA looks forward to working with the new Administration and 111th Congress to make healthcare reform a reality."

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 39 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide healthcare coverage for more than 102 million individuals - one-in-three Americans. For more information on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and its member companies, please visit www.BCBS.com.