

September 25, 2023

AHIP MEMO:

BACKGROUND FOR NAIC SPECIAL (EX) COMMITTEE ON R&I HEALTH WORKSTREAM MEMBERS FOR 9.28.23 CALL

## **AHIP Member Activities on Health Equity & Behavioral Health**

AHIP Members are working to address the critical issue of behavioral health and the integral part that plays in health equity. While not an exhaustive list, the following list of activities illustrate a variety of innovative programs connecting enrollees with the services most appropriate for their individual care. For additional information, please visit AHIP's website, [Health Insurance Providers Actions Concerning Mental Health](#).

### **AmeriHealth Caritas:**

- The Confess Project of America (TCPA), a national not-for-profit organization, and [AmeriHealth Caritas Georgia](#), are teaming up to help combat mental illness in Georgia communities. As part of the collaboration, AmeriHealth Caritas is donating \$25,000 to boost a TCPA mental health initiative. The organization's support of TCPA will support program expansion in rural areas and provide mental health training programs for barbers to become mental health advocates in their communities.

### **Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield:**

- The [Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas](#), funded by [Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield](#), announced that grants are being awarded in 2023 to public schools, universities, and nonprofit groups in Arkansas totaling \$3.38 million. The grants focus on behavioral health, social barriers to health, health equity, maternal health, and innovation. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Little Rock, for example, is getting a \$50,000 grant to fund a suicide prevention program in 5 school districts in Baxter, Crawford, and Garland counties, while the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership, Lake Village is getting \$150,000 to provide mental health first aid training to Arkansas first responders and other healthcare workers, enabling them to provide additional resources to children and adults in the state. Other grants include \$79,750 for Hispanic Community Services, Inc., Jonesboro, which will allow the organization to provide bilingual mental health services and education in Craighead, Crittenden, Green, Independence, Jackson, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, and Randolph counties.

### **Blue Shield of California:**

- [Blue Shield of California](#) announced \$300,000 in community investments to nonprofit organizations that advance the health and well-being of youth and communities of color. The funding supports initiatives focused on youth development, social justice, and health equity. The announcement builds on the work of Blue Shield's signature BlueSky youth mental health

initiative. Blue Shield created BlueSky because youth mental illness is a pressing issue that demands early intervention: it's the number one reason California children are hospitalized, and half of all lifetime cases begin by the age of 14. Since Blue Shield's BlueSky initiative launched in 2019 it has funded more than 6,700 youth counseling sessions in 20 middle and high schools in San Diego and Alameda Counties, and supported Youth Mental Health First Aid training for more than 2,000 educators statewide.

#### **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina:**

- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina has invested more than \$4.3 million in partnerships, programs, and initiatives to support children, youth and families involved with the child welfare system. Since 2019, these investments have helped to increase the number of available foster families, address the mental health needs of children, strengthen families across the state and provide opportunities for youth transitioning out of foster care.
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is expanding its network of behavioral health providers through a collaboration with Headway, a mental health care company that works with insurers to deliver high-value mental health care. Together the 2 companies will make it easier for Blue Cross NC members to quickly access – as soon as 48 hours – in-network therapists and psychiatrists who meet their specific needs. The focus of the collaboration is on improving access to care for underserved communities, including rural and socially vulnerable counties, children and adolescents, and individuals across diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

#### **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas:**

- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas members now have access to nearly 4,000 in-network behavioral health providers through Headway and are able to receive care 2 to 3 times faster than average. For BCBSTX members that live out of state, there are more than 21,000 high-quality credentialed behavioral health providers now in-network across 26 states practice as a part of the Headway network, with 42% of providers identifying as Black, Hispanic, Asian, or multiracial and more than 80 languages spoken.

#### **Blue Cross of Idaho:**

- Blue Cross of Idaho and the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health have a history of expanding health equity in Idaho. These include:
  - High-Risk Maternity Management. Blue Cross of Idaho offers a comprehensive program to help pregnant women with acute or chronic health conditions have a safe and healthy pregnancy and childbirth. A Maternity Coordinator conducts a risk assessment with a member which includes questions about physical and behavioral health. After identifying concerns, the member connects with a case manager to craft a personalized care plan in tandem with the member's provider.
  - Grants. \$5,000-\$10,000 per school in technical assistance grants to help implement the Healthy Minds Partnership, an on campus behavioral health program.

#### **Blue Cross of North Carolina:**

- Blue Cross North Carolina has invested more than \$2 million in organizations serving diverse communities, including El Futuro – a Mental Health Treatment Initiative for Latino families that supports improved access to higher quality care, reduced disparities in rural health care, better engagement with rural providers, improved mental health outcomes and creating a model program in a pay-for-value-based environment.

**Cambia:**

- Cambia Health Foundation is investing \$400,000 to improve health outcomes for pregnant people, new parents, and young children. Cambia's grant partners are working to reduce maternal health disparities, increase behavioral health access, or a combination of both. Examples of projects funded with these grants include full integration of behavioral and emotional health for children and their families, early intervention, and increasing the percentage of behavioral health providers who identify with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

**CareFirst BlueCross Blue Shield:**

- Focused on providing awareness and support to the community by addressing health disparities, the "Huddle Up for Health" program is the latest collaborative initiative between the Baltimore Ravens and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. The program continues the ongoing community wellness and health equity initiatives established by the 2 organizations, while broadening focus to include other health challenges individuals face throughout Maryland. This year, the Huddle Up for Health program will distribute a grant to a select Maryland-based nonprofit to build new programming or enhance current initiatives centered around mental health support and awareness. Eligible nonprofits can apply to receive up to \$50,000 in grant funding.

**CareOregon:**

- CareOregon is investing \$12,650 in Project Homeless Connect Washington County, a nonprofit organization that provides community connections to shelter, critical resources, services, and housing, to help fund the training and certification of up to 17 Peer Support Specialists and Certified Recovery Mentors who have lived experience with mental health services and addiction recovery.
- CareOregon has provided Lutheran Community Services Northwest with a \$79,867 grant to help make more culturally specific mental health resources available to newly arriving and already resettled Ukrainian refugees in the region.

**CareSource:**

- Along with providing comprehensive health care coverage and options for the uninsured, CareSource launched a \$6 million commitment to invest in affordable housing and partnered with IU Health to offer a virtual care program for students with mental health concerns.

**CVS Health:**

- CVS Health's Project Health initiative deploys mobile vans into local communities nationwide to locations such as churches, community centers and homeless shelters to conduct physical and mental health screenings for early identification of health conditions.
- CVS Health is providing resources to help historically marginalized communities across America that face unique mental health challenges. At more than 1,000 MinuteClinic® locations in the U.S., patients can access depression screening services. At select MinuteClinic locations, patients can receive in-person and virtual mental health counseling services for depression, stress and anxiety from licensed mental health providers. Since the launch of MinuteClinic behavioral health services in 2021, 99% of new MinuteClinic patients have been able to see a mental health provider within 7 days, and 80% reported a reduction in depression symptoms.

**Elevance:**

- Communities In Schools of Appalachian Highlands (CIS-AH) has announced a partnership with the [Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation](#) to help reduce risk factors among students that lead to mental health and substance use disorder. The \$750,000, 3-year investment from Anthem will help CIS-AH add new elements to its evidence-based programming that will strengthen the support provided to thousands of students, families, and staff at 51 schools across Southwest Virginia. CIS-AH places Student Support Coordinators within schools to cultivate relationships and become support systems for students – putting them in a unique position to intervene at the first sign of an adverse experience. Coordinators provide targeted, individualized services to the most at-risk students, while also offering school-wide education and support.
- [The Anthem Foundation](#) has committed \$13 million in grants to promote equity in mental health, particularly for people with substance use disorders. Each program will focus on one of the following goals: prevention and early intervention of risk factors that lead to substance use disorders, improved access and quality of treatment to reduce morbidity and mortality of substance use disorders, and community support to promote lifelong recovery. These grants are part of up to \$30 million the Foundation plans to invest over the next 3 years to make significant progress toward reducing substance use disorders and their health impacts.

**Florida Blue:**

- The [Florida Blue Foundation](#) is making a \$3.8 million investment to enhance mental health for Florida's children, families, and seniors. Twelve nonprofit organizations across the state share in the investment, which will support community-based programs that directly improve access to and quality of mental well-being services, particularly for the underserved and uninsured, including racial and ethnic minorities, and low-income populations. The investment will provide mental health counseling and education in schools for under/uninsured students and provide a safe environment for mental and emotional healing for members of the LGBTQ+ community, transgender individuals, victims of hate crimes, and LGBTQ+ seniors, in addition to supporting other mental health programs.
- A behavioral health program to help child trauma victims. A food pharmacy program that provides prescriptions for healthy food. A cultural and linguistic educational curriculum to enhance medical provider-patient interactions. These are just a few programs in Florida that are sharing more than \$11 million in grants from the [Florida Blue Foundation](#) to improve food security, mental well-being and health equity. Other examples of the types of programs that earned grants include a mobile pantry to deliver healthy nutritious meals to residents living in food deserts; in-home behavioral health services to help children and families in medically underserved areas; a culturally-tailored telehealth program to address loneliness and isolation in homebound Hispanic adults; and mental health first aid training for a variety of community resources.

**Health Care Service Corporation:**

- [Health Care Service Corporation \(HCSC\)](#) has significantly increased the number of behavioral health providers available to members. By adding Headway as an in-network provider in Illinois and Texas, HCSC has expanded member telehealth and in-person choices for access to behavioral health care. More than 21,000 mental health providers across 26 states practice as a part of the Headway network, with 42% of providers identifying as Black, Hispanic, Asian, or multiracial and more than 80 languages spoken.

**Humana:**

- The [Humana Foundation](#) has announced a partnership with Greater Louisville Inc. (GLI) to help small business mental health providers scale their operations and increase sustainable services to victims of trauma in the city. Grants between \$50,000 and \$100,000 will be awarded for projects that enable providers to significantly increase the number of people receiving mental health services. Priority will be given to applicants who commit to addressing categories of mental health that are in dire shortage – such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and youth counselors – and applicants prioritizing care to diverse and underrepresented populations.

**Independence Blue Cross:**

- [Independence Blue Cross](#) has launched a new video highlighting the Know Your Mind mental health public health campaign that educates the community about symptoms of depression and anxiety and offers resources to support mental health. The video focuses on loneliness in the senior community, and how it affects both physical and mental health. The video takes a look at how Philadelphia Parks and Recreation creates community spaces like the West Oak Lane Older Adult Center to foster companionship and well-being.
- [Independence Blue Cross](#) has launched a new video examining the impact of the Black barbershop on mental health. The video, which is part of Independence’s ‘How I Know My Mind’ series, features barbers and clients from Da’ Thairapist Hairquarters in South Philadelphia discussing how barbershops play the role of trusted community support systems.

**Kaiser Permanente:**

- [Kaiser Permanente](#), the nation’s largest integrated, nonprofit health care organization, is providing financial support to 13 organizations across the United States whose work focuses on ending the generational cycles of trauma caused by structural racism and injustice experienced by Black Americans and other communities of color. This trauma often manifests in situations and actions that hurt children by causing adverse childhood experiences, known as ACEs, which have negative lifelong consequences for health and well-being.
- [Kaiser Permanente of the Northwest](#) has awarded \$3.3 million in community grants to 11 nonprofit organizations. The grants are part of a new initiative aimed at building social connections and reducing social isolation in diverse communities that have faced discrimination because of race, ethnicity, sexual identity, immigration status, and more. The social and emotional well-being grant initiative was created in collaboration with the Coalition of Communities of Color, an Oregon statewide community-based organization, in response to recommendations from community members who expressed that isolation from their support systems has led to depression, anxiety, and stress.

**L.A. Care:**

- [L.A. Care](#) has committed \$1.1 million to benefit 9 community-based organizations, policy research agencies, and clinical providers to help close the historic and widening health disparity gap. L.A. Care Health Plan launched the Generating African American Infant and Nurturers’ Survival Initiative (GAAINS) last year, with an initial \$1 million commitment for 8 organizations working toward that end. Maternal Mental Health NOW, one of this year’s grantees, will use the funds to tailor its Perinatal Peer Support (PPS) program. The program aims to help the Black birthing population in Los Angeles County reduce stigma, relieve symptoms and navigate the perinatal mental health care system and improve perinatal mental health disorders.

**Magellan Healthcare:**

- Magellan Healthcare hosted this summer a webinar focused on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) mental health and relationship impacts from trauma. The discussion covered the state of BIPOC mental health, understanding traumas and triggers, and setting healthy boundaries to protect important personal, familial, co-worker, and healthcare provider relationships.

**Molina:**

- The MolinaCares Accord, in collaboration with Molina Healthcare of California, has launched its California Equity and Accessibility Initiative with an initial \$1.6 million to advance health equity throughout the state. MolinaCares will support Reach Out's "Mamás y Bebés" program, which provides new and expecting mothers in the Inland Empire with mental health services and support to improve maternal and infant health outcomes.

**Providence Health Plan:**

- Providence Health Plan offers a virtual self-directed program called Learn to Live based on the principles of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). It's confidential, available in English and Spanish, and can be accessible from anywhere. Learn to Live includes 5 online self-help programs covering social anxiety, depression, stress, anxiety, and worry, insomnia, and substance abuse. Learn to Live is backed by one-on-one support from professional coaching.

**UPMC:**

- UPMC Health Plan and UPMC clinicians have announced the launch of the health system's new community-based Health Access Initiative for Recovery (HAIR). Working with community partners, UPMC Health Plan created the HAIR program to train Allegheny County-based Black barbers and stylists on how to talk to their clientele about substance use, anxiety, depression, suicide prevention, and how to properly refer them to resources and help. The goals of the HAIR initiative include improving health outcomes in the Black community through increasing culturally meaningful outreach, supporting ongoing engagement and education, and reducing health disparities that can impact prevention, early intervention, and treatment in underserved communities.

*Please reach out to AHIP's SVP of State Affairs and Policy, Miranda Motter [MMotter@ahip.org] should you have any questions.*