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Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation Research Report Proposes ‘Health Equity Action Plan’

Strategies Aimed at Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Inequities in State’s Health Care Delivery System

BOSTON (Dec. 13, 2023) – The [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation](#), a nonprofit grantmaking and research organization, today released a report that outlines a cohesive framework and proposed action plan for achieving a racially and ethnically equitable health care delivery system across Massachusetts.

The [report](#), produced with the Foundation’s research partner, Manatt Health, features a Health Equity Action Plan and companion toolkit that outline a vision, organizing structure and set of practical steps that health care delivery system leaders and other stakeholders can implement both now and in the future. The overall vision, formed through the plan’s extensive research process, is for all people in Massachusetts to experience high-quality, accessible and timely care from providers who understand and respect their culture.

“Many health care organizations across the Commonwealth are actively focused on addressing racism and reducing health disparities and doing very good work. We need to leverage these varied and often siloed efforts in a more cohesive way in order to create change of greater magnitude,” said Audrey Shelto, President and CEO of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. “It’s imperative that we coordinate our efforts so that we can make substantial and definitive progress toward an equitable health care system in Massachusetts.”

The Foundation presented the report during an event today with a panel of experts who discussed how the Health Equity Action Plan can be launched in Massachusetts – where health disparities among people of color can result in an economic burden of [an estimated \\$5.9 billion](#) each year due to avoidable spending, lost productivity and premature death.

The report outlines several “fast-start” actions in the first year to lay the groundwork, and includes examples such as identifying strategies to include consumers and communities in planning and activities; and building a shared inventory of best practices. The report also calls for a permanent organizing entity to serve as a “home” that documents implementation and collaboration statewide, and the deployment of “action labs” in areas such as clinical care, payment models, provider access standards, and workforce strategies, among others, all designed to strengthen equity.

Following the event, the Foundation intends to move forward with a formal launch of the Health Equity Action Plan which will include a collaboration with the [Health Equity Compact](#), a coalition of over 80 leaders of color



in health care, public health, labor, business, academia, life sciences and philanthropy united in advancing health equity in Massachusetts.

“Building on our health equity movement – from the hallways of community health centers to the corridors of power on Beacon Hill – we must take actionable steps toward health care delivery reform in order to address health disparities and create a healthier Commonwealth,” said Rosa Colon-Kolacko, president and founder of Global Equity Learning and member of the Health Equity Compact’s leadership team. “Statewide, systemic change requires the kind of collective effort outlined in the Health Equity Action Plan. We look forward to collaborating with the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation and other partners committed to driving transformational change for health equity in the health care delivery system and beyond.”

The Foundation anticipates that the proposed Health Equity Action Plan will evolve as part of a collaborative, co-designed process and be informed by progress, community voices, lessons learned and the emergence of new priorities and strategies.

“Our approach serves as a concrete proposal to launch systematic and coordinated action,” Shelto said. “We expect this work to be challenging, as all important endeavors are, and our progress will truly accelerate when we all start working together with a shared vision and common goal.”

The Foundation’s report, titled *Achieving a Racially and Ethnically Equitable Health Care Delivery System in Massachusetts: A Vision and Proposed Action Plan*, is available online via the following link:

<https://www.bluecrossmafoundation.org/publication/achieving-racially-and-ethnically-equitable-health-care-delivery-system-massachusetts>

About the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation

The mission of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation is to ensure equitable access to health care for all those in the Commonwealth who are economically, racially, culturally or socially marginalized. The Foundation was established in 2001 with an initial endowment from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. It operates separately from the company and is governed by its own Board of Directors. For more information, visit www.bluecrossmafoundation.org.

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