

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Blue & You Foundation* issues fourth annual call for grant applications to support health programs**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (May 2, 2005) — The *Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas* has issued its fourth annual call for grant applications to fund 2006 health programs, which support services to improve the health of Arkansans.

The foundation anticipates awarding approximately \$1 million in 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. The foundation also intends to devote a portion of this year's grant funding to two areas: Programs that address childhood obesity, especially long-term behavioral change and environmental factors that affect obesity; and programs that improve the effectiveness of delivery of services by free clinics in Arkansas. An example might be a methodology that would help clinics improve their infrastructure for dispensing free or low-cost medications to Arkansans who can't afford them.

The deadline for applications is July 15, 2005. Information about applying for a grant is found on the foundation Web site at www.BlueAndYouFoundationArkansas.org, or may be requested by writing to Blue & You Foundation, Attention: Peggy Houser, USAble Corporate Center, 320 West Capitol, Suite 200, Little Rock, AR 72201. The grant applications will be reviewed in the fall and grants awarded in December for 2006 programs.

"The poor health status of our citizens ranks 46th in the nation and contributes to rising medical costs," said Robert L. Shoptaw, chief executive officer of Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield and chairman of the foundation's board of directors. "By

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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 foundation awarded its third grants totaling \$1,357,453, at the end of 2004 to fund 21 programs statewide during 2005.

Recipients of 2005 grants included the Arkansas Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention; Arkansas Children’s Hospital Foundation; Arkansas Educational Telecommunications Network Foundation; Arkansas Human Development Corporation (AHDC); Arkansas Rice Depot; BAPTIST HEALTH Foundation; Community Clinic at St. Francis House; Crittenden Memorial Hospital; Crowley’s Ridge Rural Health Coalition; Daughters of Charity Services of Arkansas (DCS-ARK); Easter Seals of Arkansas (ESA); Focus, Inc.; Greater Texarkana People’s Clinic, Inc.; Kiwanis Activities, Inc.; North Arkansas Partnership for Health Education; Pine Bluff Chapter of Links, Inc.; Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative; St. Bernards Foundation; University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS)/College of Public Health/University of Arkansas at Little Rock/W. Bowen School of Law; UAMS/Delta Arkansas Health Education Center (AHEC); and UAMS Department of Pediatrics/ KIDS FIRST.

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, serving approximately one-third of the fully insured market. Arkansas Blue Cross and its affiliates have more than 2,700 employees. If combined, the 40 independent, locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans collectively provide health-care coverage for 93 million — nearly one in three — Americans.