

Florida Literacy Coalition

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Local Health Literacy Grants Made Available Through the Support of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida

Ten Adult ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and Family Literacy programs across the state of Florida have been awarded one-year grants of \$5,000 each to establish a network of health literacy projects that will provide important information about health and nutrition while teaching English.

The Florida Health Literacy Grant Initiative, funded by **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, Inc.**, and operated by the **Florida Literacy Coalition**, is a three-year commitment to improving the health literacy level of Florida residents by assisting literacy programs through financial as well as technical support. As part of the initiative, the Florida Literacy Coalition will be providing grantees with training opportunities, inter-agency collaboration facilitation, as well as resource sharing forums to build upon the strengths of each individual program.

There is growing recognition among health care providers and adult educators around the country that limited English language and literacy skills can have a significant impact on one's health. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 14 percent of American adults have below basic health literacy skills. Low health literacy costs an estimated \$73 billion a year in the form of longer hospital stays, emergency room visits, increased doctor visits and increased medication.

"We very much appreciate Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida's generous support and look forward to partnering on this effort," said Greg Smith, Executive Director of the Florida Literacy Coalition. "Working in collaboration with local programs, this initiative will help adult learners throughout Florida to better navigate the medical system and make informed choices about their health and nutrition. The information and skills that they will acquire may very well be life changing."

Recipients of the grant awards for the 2009-2010 cycle include the following:

ORGANIZATION	COUNTIES SERVED	CONTACT PERSON	PHONE
Adult Literacy League	Orange, Osceola, Seminole	Joyce Whidden	(407) 422-1540
Manatee Technical Institute	Manatee	Linda Agresta	(941) 751-7900 x. 2003
TECO-ALCO	Osceola	Melissa Padgett	(407) 344-5080
South Florida Community College	Highlands	Nelly Ford	(863) 784-7380

Florida Community College in Jacksonville	Duval, Nassau	Loida Puno	(904) 361-6350
United Methodist Cooperative Ministries	Pinellas	Jan Setzekorn	(727) 442-6881
Haitian-American Organization for Women	Dade	Cuckita Bellande	(305) 245-8158
Volunteers of America	Monroe	Mary Casanova	(305) 294-4352
Literacy Volunteers of Lee County	Lee	Tess Murphy	(239) 242-4374
Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition	Palm Beach	Darlene Kostrub	(561) 279-9103

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida

Celebrating 65 years as Florida’s leader in the health industry, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida is mission-driven to improve affordable access to health care. BCBSF is a not-for-profit, policyholder-owned, tax-paying mutual company. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., BCBSF is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies. For more information concerning BCBSF, please visit www.bcbsfl.com or to listen to Floridians speak out on health care issues visit www.thepowerofthehumanvoice.com.

About the Florida Literacy Coalition

Established in 1985, The Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) promotes supports and advocates for the effective delivery of quality adult and family literacy services in the state of Florida. As a statewide umbrella literacy organization and the host of Florida’s Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center, FLC provides a range of services to support more than 300 adult education, literacy and family literacy providers. Special emphasis is placed on assisting community based literacy organizations with their training and program development needs.