



FLORIDA LITERACY COALITION, INC.



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Florida**

An Independent Licensee of the
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Paul Kluding, BCBSF, 904-905-3404;
or Gregory Smith, FLC, 407-246-7110

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BCBSF and FLC Establish Florida Health Literacy Grants Program

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Feb. 11 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) is proud to announce it has awarded the Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) a three-year grant for the establishment of a statewide health literacy initiative. The goal of the grant is to create a new emphasis on health literacy throughout Florida and provide health-education resources for local adult ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and family literacy programs.

The cornerstone of the statewide initiative is a mini-grants program that will award up to 46 renewable, one-year \$5,000 grants over three years. These projects will aim to raise awareness among ESOL students and families by providing information and resources for better understanding of the medical system and how to make wise health decisions.

"Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida supports real and meaningful projects that strive to provide solutions to some of the most critical social issues facing Florida residents," said Susan Towler, vice president of community affairs for BCBSF. "Those who are more educated in health care matters are more likely to take the precautions necessary to remain healthy. As an organization focused on providing quality and affordable care for all Floridians, we are committed to improving health literacy skills for the betterment of the community."

In addition to the mini-grants, BCBSF will support regular training opportunities for teachers, tutors and administrators on how to incorporate health information and topics into their curriculum. BCBSF will also sponsor a first-ever health literacy track at the annual Florida Literacy Conference from May 6 to May 8 in Clearwater, Fla.

This statewide program will build upon the recently released Staying Healthy ESOL curriculum, a free resource developed by the FLC through a grant from the Florida Department of Education, Division of Workforce Education.

"The support of this initiative reflects Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida's commitment to helping adult learners, many of whom are new to this country, become informed health advocates for themselves and their families," said Greg Smith, executive director of FLC. "We look forward to working together on this program and truly appreciate their generous support."

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.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) is a leader in Florida's health industry. Since 1944, the company has been dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of all those it serves by offering an array of choices. 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 see its Website at www.bcbsfl.com.