



**Arkansas
BlueCross BlueShield**

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield honored by National Business Group on Health as one of Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles

Arkansas Blue Cross among 66 employers recognized for promoting healthy workplaces

WASHINGTON, DC (June 23, 2010) – The National Business Group on Health, a non-profit association of large employers, today honored Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield for its commitment and dedication to promoting a healthy workplace and encouraging its workers and families to support and maintain healthy lifestyles.

Arkansas Blue Cross was among 66 employers to receive the 2010 **Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles** award at the Leadership Summit sponsored by the National Business Group on Health's Institute on Innovation in Workforce Well-being. Arkansas Blue Cross received a Gold Award for its **Wellness Works** employee wellness program. This marks the first year Arkansas Blue Cross has received an award.

"To become a healthier nation, individually and collectively, we must focus on healthy lifestyles and disease prevention rather than just treating illness," said Mark White, president and chief executive officer of Arkansas Blue Cross. "By eliminating poor diet, inactivity and tobacco use, it is estimated that 80 percent of heart disease and stroke, 80 percent of type 2 diabetes and 40 percent of cancer could be eliminated."

Arkansas Blue Cross launched its **Wellness Works** program in 1999 with a mission to encourage its 2,700 employees "to initiate or expand healthier lifestyles." A Wellness

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Works leadership team develops the strategy and goals for the employee program, with input from an employee Wellness Works council. Wellness Ambassadors, employee volunteers, are available in every corporate and regional office location. The *My Wellness Works* program provides an incentive point system based on a variety of educational opportunities and physical activity goals. The onsite cafeteria even features heart-healthy meal selections for employees.

Building on the wellness culture that is growing within the company, Arkansas Blue Cross has collaborated with other companies and government agencies to sponsor and host programs such as National Walk @ Lunch Day and the Blue & You Fitness Challenge. The Blue & You Fitness Challenge is an annual three-month-long exercise contest that has grown into a national event with almost 200 groups with more than 11,000 participants. The Wellness Works programs also have earned recognition from the American Council for Fitness and Nutrition, The American Heart Association as a Platinum Fit-Friendly Company, and the Arkansas Governor's Council on Fitness Corporate Leadership Awards.

"We are delighted to recognize Arkansas Blue Cross for its innovation and commitment to providing lifestyle improvement programs designed to encourage healthier lifestyles for their employees," said Helen Darling, president of the National Business Group on Health. "Arkansas Blue Cross and its management team recognize just how important a healthy workforce is to increasing productivity and controlling health care costs, and we congratulate them on receiving this award."

Winners of the *Best Employers for Healthy Lifestyles* awards were honored in one of three categories: Platinum, for established workplace well-being programs with measurable success and documented outcomes; Gold, for creating cultural and environmental changes

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that support employees who are committed to long-term behavior changes; and Silver, for employers who have launched significant programs or services to promote living a healthier lifestyle.

About Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield

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. If combined, the 39 independent, locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans collectively provide health-care coverage for 98 million — nearly one in three — Americans.

About the National Business Group on Health

The National Business Group on Health is the nation's only non-profit organization devoted exclusively to representing large employers' perspective on national health policy issues and providing practical solutions to its members' most important health care problems. The Business Group helps drive today's health agenda while promoting ideas for controlling health care costs, improving patient safety and quality of care and sharing best practices in health benefits management with senior benefits, HR professionals, and medical directors from leading corporations. Business Group members, which include 63 Fortune 100 companies, provide health coverage for more than 50 million U.S. workers, retirees and their families. For more information, visit www.businessgrouphealth.org.

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