



**Arkansas  
BlueCross BlueShield**  
An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield announces retirement of Sharon Allen**

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Jan. 10, 2008)** – Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield announces the upcoming retirement of Sharon K. Allen, 63, president and chief operating officer, according to Hayes McClerkin, chairman of the Arkansas Blue Cross board of directors.

“Sharon Allen will retire effective Jan. 29, 2008,” said McClerkin. “Planned retirements of senior leaders are common occurrences in large organizations; therefore, procedures are in place for the Arkansas Blue Cross executive management and board of directors to engage in a continual process of succession planning and key staff evaluation when addressing any vacancies resulting from planned retirements, including the position held by Mrs. Allen. She will be leaving an executive leadership team with an average tenure of 20 years with the company, ready to step up and carry on her legacy. Mrs. Allen’s duties will be reassigned to existing senior leadership in the company.

“Mrs. Allen informed senior leadership and the board of directors more than three years ago of her intended retirement,” continued McClerkin.

Although Allen will officially retire at the end of January, she will continue to serve in a consulting capacity and will be involved with special projects on a part-time basis through 2008 and into 2009.

“At retirement, Sharon Allen will have served Arkansas Blue Cross for 40 years

(more)

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and will be recognized for having helped successfully shape the health-care market both in Arkansas and beyond our borders,” said Robert L. Shoptaw, chief executive officer of Arkansas Blue Cross. “And she has developed a well-trained, knowledgeable and skilled leadership team that shares her devotion to employees, commitment to customers, passion for developing strong relationships with health-care providers, and deep dedication to Arkansas.”

Allen has been chief operating officer of the corporation since 1997. She was promoted to president and chief operating officer in 2002. During her 40-year career with Arkansas Blue Cross, she has held a number of national leadership positions in the health-care financing industry, including serving on the executive committee of the Medicare Part A User Group and co-chairing the Health Care Financing Administration’s Utilization Review Technical Advisory Group.

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 2,550 employees. 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.