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HCSC Announces Three-Year Initiative to Improve the Health of at Least 1 Million Children and Inspire a "New Generation of Wellness"

May 23, 2011 09:08 AM Eastern Daylight Time

CHICAGO--(EON: [Enhanced Online News](#))--[Health Care Service Corporation](#) (HCSC), the country's largest customer-owned health insurer, launched a three-year initiative today called "[Healthy Kids, Healthy Families](#)" to improve the health of at least 1 million children in the four states where it operates Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans (IL, NM, OK and TX). The initiative will fund and partner with nonprofit organizations that encourage nutrition education, promote physical activity, prevent and manage disease, or support safe environments for children.

"Through our Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans, Healthy Kids, Healthy Families will focus resources on innovative ways to improve the health of young people and inspire a new generation of wellness in our communities," said Patricia Hemingway Hall, president and CEO of HCSC. "In such areas as physical exercise, nutrition, and the prevention and management of diseases, we want to partner with local organizations who can best help kids and their families establish healthier habits and routines to last a lifetime."

In 2011, Healthy Kids, Healthy Families expects to provide more than 150,000 immunizations through a unique mobile van program, encourage children to exercise by building safe places to play, and offer entertaining nutrition education to the schools and kitchen tables of 125,000 students. To foster greater community health improvement, HCSC is seeking alliances with local nonprofit organizations which offer sustainable, measurable programs that strengthen and enrich communities in its four states. Founding partners are listed below:

- [The OrganWise Guys](#) – an award-winning program that helps teachers incorporate health information into their lesson plans by using child-friendly characters based on organs of the body who teach students the importance of adopting healthy habits.
- [KaBOOM!](#) – a national nonprofit organization utilizing community leadership and participation to provide community playgrounds and create safe play spaces for children.
- [Mobile Health Vans](#) – a fleet of customized vans that provide immunizations and health screenings to uninsured and medically underserved children in the communities where at-risk families live and work.
- [Court Appointed Special Advocate](#) – a nonprofit organization that recruits, trains and supports volunteers to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtroom and other settings.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Families is designed to give nonprofit, charitable organizations the opportunity to join HCSC in strategic alliances that will enhance their ongoing activities or create new programs committed to building healthy communities. Grant opportunities are open to 501(c)(3) organizations whose missions align with the Healthy Kids, Healthy Families criteria.

"HCSC is giving visibility to one of the toughest public health issues of our generation: childhood obesity," said Michelle Lombardo, president of The OrganWise Guys. "Through its partnership with us, local University Cooperative Extension Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture SNAP-ed Program, HCSC is demonstrating leadership at its best. I'm proud to work with a company that supports evidence-based programming which positively affects families, communities and the economy at large."

"To help children lead healthier lives, KaBOOM! is working to ensure there's a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America, and this partnership certainly helps us toward that goal," said Darell Hammond, founder and CEO of KaBOOM!. "Health Care Service Corporation understands the importance of play for the health of children, and we're proud to be a part of advancing their efforts to measurably impact the health and wellness of 1 million children over the next three years."

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All nonprofit organizations interested in applying for grants are encouraged to visit www.HealthyKidsHealthyFamilies.org to review the program criteria or to submit an application. All organizations must submit an application by Aug. 15.

About Healthy Kids, Healthy Families:

"Healthy Kids, Healthy Families" is a three-year initiative designed to encourage health education, promote physical activity, prevent and manage disease, and support safe environments for children. The program works through investments and partnerships with nonprofit organizations that offer sustainable, measurable programs to reach children directly, through schools and other third parties. Major founding partners include The OrganWise Guys, KaBOOM! and mobile health vans. The program is supported by Health Care Service Corporation and its Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in Illinois, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. For more information or to seek partnership and funding opportunities, please visit www.HealthyKidsHealthyFamilies.org.

About Health Care Service Corporation:

Health Care Service Corporation is the country's largest customer-owned health insurer and fourth largest health insurer overall, with more than 13 million members in its Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in Illinois, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. A Mutual Legal Reserve Company, HCSC is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. HCSC has a rating of AA- (Very Strong) from Standard and Poor's, A1 (Good) from Moody's and A+ (Superior) from A.M. Best Company. For more information, please visit www.HCSC.com or follow us at www.twitter.com/HCSC.

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