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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



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Mar 21, 2008

Chicago-based Health Care Service Corp., the parent company of Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) health plans in Illinois, Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma, is stepping up its efforts to encourage wellness among children and adults, the *Chicago Tribune* reports. In addition to adding the term "wellness" to its mission statement, the company has launched a variety of wellness initiatives, including efforts to integrate wellness programs into basic health benefits packages. The company also has redistributed its charitable giving priorities to focus on childhood obesity interventions. For instance, BCBS of Illinois on Thursday announced a new campaign designed to enhance existing programs that educate children and families about healthy eating and exercise habits. In addition, the insurer recently joined the Corporate Advisory Committee of the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) and has awarded the group \$38,000 to support the development of a database to track the progress of local and statewide obesity prevention efforts. Recently, BCBS of Illinois also has directed charitable contributions to programs such as Organ Wise Guys, which educates elementary school students at roughly 20 schools statewide about sound nutrition and healthy behaviors. President of BCBS of Illinois Paul Boulis noted that expanding access to fun and motivating interventions will help children "live healthier and more productive lives" while having "an impact on the long term health and wellness of [the] state" (Japsen, *Chicago Tribune*, 3/20/08; BCBS of Illinois release, 3/20/08).

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