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Ten Southeast Michigan Free Health Care Clinics Receive Financial Support from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network *Clinics to Share in \$330,000 in Grants to Help Care for Michigan's Uninsured*

DETROIT, May 16, 2007—Ten free health care clinics located in seven southeast Michigan communities received financial support today to help them continue their mission to provide low- or no-cost health or dental care to more than 20,000 uninsured people. The clinics will share \$330,000 in grants from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network.

The grants were announced at the soon-to-be-opened St. Vincent de Paul / Cooley High Health Center at Cooley High School on Hubbell Avenue in Detroit. The free clinic is currently located in a trailer on Pembroke in Detroit and is moving to its new school location in July, assisted by grant dollars.

The \$330,000 is part of \$1 million the Michigan Blues are providing in 2007 to 32 free clinics providing health or dental services located throughout Michigan. Today's grant brings the total financial support the Michigan Blues have provided to free clinics statewide to \$3 million since 2005.

Four new free clinics have opened in the state since 2005, thanks in part to grant dollars. Grant dollars have helped clinics sustain operations and meet urgent needs, from purchasing medications to expanding services, from obtaining software to schedule patient visits to buying basic office supplies. Some dollars have been dedicated to help support clinics providing dental services.

“We are pleased to be working collaboratively with a volunteer organization such as the Free Clinics of Michigan. Both of our organizations share a nonprofit commitment to help promote access to health care in Michigan communities. The free clinics are delivering needed services to Michigan residents who otherwise might not have access to health or dental care,” said Kevin Seitz, Blues executive vice president of health care value enhancement.

“Because they cannot afford it, the uninsured often have to delay or go without seeing a physician for conditions that can be treated early in a primary care setting by a physician. When a condition is not addressed early, it can lead to trips to the emergency room, is more costly to treat, and can result in hospital stays that could be avoided. This affects everyone in Michigan.”

“We applaud Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan’s continuing support of the work done by free clinics,” said Charissa Shawcross, director of health services at the Joy-Southfield Community Health Center, representing Free Clinics of Michigan. “Fifty-two free clinics across the state attempt to provide health care to the 1.2 million Michigan residents with no health insurance. With the help of the Blues, we can work to increase capacity and provide needed services to our neighbors.”

“The Joy-Southfield Health Center on Detroit’s west side moved into a new facility one year ago.” Shawcross said. “We have increased our capacity from eight patients a month to 200. Our clients drive up to 35 miles to receive health care. We are able to provide health care to the residents in an area that experiences disproportionately high rates of diabetes, hypertension, asthma and infant mortality.”

The 10 southeast Michigan clinics receiving grants this year are located in counties with nearly 400,000 uninsured residents. Here are their locations:

Detroit (4): St. Frances Cabrini Clinic, Joy-Southfield Health and Education Center, St. Vincent de Paul Health Center at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish and The HUDA Clinic

Highland Park: Thea Bowman Wellness Institute

Pontiac: Gary Burnstein Community Health Clinic

Brownstown Twp.: Wyandotte Clinic for the Working Uninsured

Southfield: Tri-County Dental Health Council

Taylor: MAPI Free Medical Clinic

Ypsilanti: Hope Medical Clinic

Additional details about how the grant dollars will be used can be found at bcbsm.com/home/bcbsm/freeclinics.shtml.

In addition to medical or dental care, some free clinics also offer mental health counseling. Free clinics rely on volunteer physicians, pharmacists, nurses, dentists and other health care professionals contributing time, services and medications. Numerous clinics are continually in jeopardy of closing, and in many cases are often forced to turn away new patients.

The company is supporting increased access to health care in a variety of ways, including serving as a member of the Michigan Health Insurance Access Advisory Council, which is committed to realistic strategies so every Michigan resident will have access to insurance.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan has a unique mission that is different from other health insurance companies. The company is committed to focusing on reducing health care costs and improving quality, increasing access to health care coverage and services, and improving the health status of Michigan's residents, particularly children.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, a nonprofit corporation, provides or administers health care benefits to just over 4.7 million members through a variety of plans: Traditional Blue Cross Blue Shield; Blue Preferred, Community Blue and Healthy Blue PPOs; Blue Care Network HMO, and Flexible Blue plans compatible with health savings accounts. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more information, visit www.bcbsm.com.

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