

# Community Investment and Social Impact Report

2021







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President and CEO

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We exist to  
be there for  
you when  
you need us.



One of my favorite items from our company's history is a simple notebook of handwritten member records. In this notebook that dates back to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska's (BCBSNE) earliest days, beautiful cursive writing captures a brief moment in time of our member's health journeys. The pages, still crisp, are testament to the earliest beginnings of the mantra we live by today: "We exist to be there for you when you need us."

Since 1939, BCBSNE has called the great Cornhusker State home. Our members and employees have lived, worked and played here for more than 80 years. In that time, much has changed, and while we no longer bookkeep by hand, we continue to be here for Nebraskans.

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed us to the beginnings of a new chapter of history and been a catalyst for change, both in the way we work and in how we support our communities.

CHEERS TO ALL  
THAT LIES AHEAD IN  
NEBRASKA'S FUTURE.  
MAY WE CONTINUE  
TO BE THERE FOR YOU  
WHEN YOU NEED US.

Time-honored traditions remain essential to the way BCBSNE gives back. After all, Nebraska is in our company's name and our employees' hearts. Their passion for the community continues to be felt in the way that they share all they have – from monetary donations collected as part of our annual United Way fundraising campaign to time supporting volunteer opportunities held in partnership with nonprofits making a difference across the state.

The pandemic has also made the inequalities of our health care system more apparent than ever before. It is abundantly clear to us that in order to continue to be there for Nebraskans, we must facilitate change.

In 2021, we announced our support for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association's National Health Equity strategy confronting our nation's crisis in racial health disparities. You will find more information in the following pages discussing how we're putting the first part of this strategy, which aims to reduce racial disparities in maternal health, into place.

Within our own company, we continue to act on the pledge we made in 2020 to make meaningful change in fighting racism. In 2021, we found new ways for employees to connect and learn from one another, such as through diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) trainings. Embracing our differences in thought, culture and ethnicity makes us stronger, and I look forward to having the opportunity to share more with you on our commitment to DEI in this report.

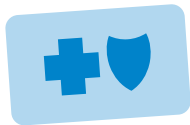
It is my hope that in the future, those who make up Nebraska's next chapter will view the details of this report with the same pride I have for that old, treasured notebook. Here, you – and they – will find a snapshot of our members', employees' and community's health journeys from 2021.

Cheers to all that lies ahead in Nebraska's future. May we continue to be there for you when you need us.

Sincerely,



STEVE GRANDFIELD  
PRESIDENT AND CEO



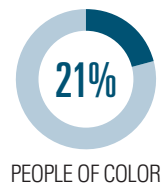
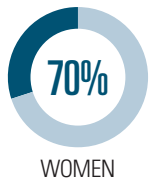
# Who We Are

## Belonging at Blue

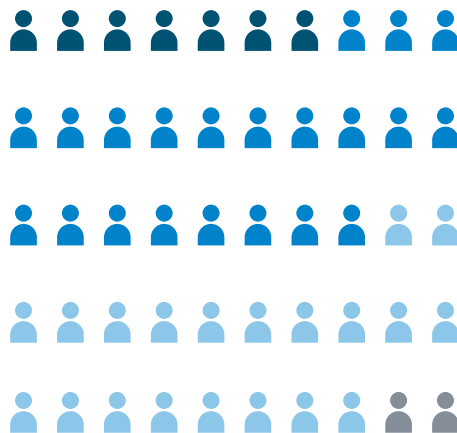
At BCBSNE, we value the unique perspective every person brings to our workplace and our community. DEI are hallmarks of our organizational culture. Our individual differences make Team Blue stronger.

### OUR WORKFORCE

**1,100+**  
EMPLOYEES



Four generations in the workforce:



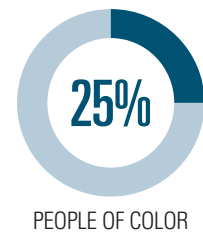
**14%** BABY BOOMER

**42%** GEN X

**40%** MILLENNIAL

**4%** GEN Z

### OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM



### OUR CULTURE

**91%**

of employees agree that BCBSNE encourages diversity and inclusion

**40%**

of employees belong to an ERG



**Building Leaders Like US for Excellence (BLUE)** supporting African American employees



**Military Families United Together** supporting veterans and military families



**Fearlessly You @ Blue** supporting LGBTQ+ employees



**Possibilities** supporting employees with disabilities



**Latinos Empowered to Achieve Their Potential (LEAP)** supporting Latino employees



**Young Professionals (YP) Connect** supporting YPs and their advocates



BCBSNE is an active member of the Greater Omaha Chamber's Commitment to Opportunity, Diversity and Equity (CODE.) CODE was created to help the community achieve sustainable growth in the areas of DEI and opportunity.



## DEI STRATEGIC DIRECTION

At BCBSNE, our goal is to make sure that every employee feels like they belong. Through Belonging at Blue, we are executing a multi-year strategy to advance our commitment to DEI.

Our strategic focus areas include:

- Attracting, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce
- Growing and developing our ERGs
- Cultivating a strong DEI presence internally and in the community
- Prioritizing inclusive leadership
- Nurturing a culture of equity mindedness



## ERG ACTIVITIES

In 2021, BCBSNE's ERGs supported a variety of community events, providing employees with opportunities to connect and grow together outside of their usual day-to-day work environments.



### Omaha Cinco de Mayo Celebration

South Omaha has hosted the celebration for decades. LEAP represented BCBSNE during this event on June 12, which included a parade along historic 24<sup>th</sup> St., marching bands and entertainers.



### Omaha Freedom Festival

BLUE represented BCBSNE with a booth at the festival featuring interactive games and giveaways. The event on June 19 was held in celebration of Juneteenth, a day that honors the end of slavery in the U.S.



### Heartland Pride Parade and Festival

Decked out in every color of the rainbow, Fearlessly You @ Blue led more than 40 employees and their families in marching in the Pride Parade on July 10. After the parade, participants headed to Blue Cross Centre to enjoy snacks and play games before setting up a community booth at Baxter Arena.



### YP Connection

During this virtual event hosted by YP Connect, employees and community members led informational sessions on the power of change, keeping faith when faced with challenges and more to help employees grow.

# Employee Engagement

## SUPPORT FOR UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS

### Annual Campaign

For more than 30 years, BCBSNE has raised funds for the United Way of the Midlands (UWM), a nonprofit dedicated to the educational, financial and health needs of the community. Employees raised more than \$373,000 in the month of October while participating in activities, such as a trivia challenge and virtual 5K run/walk.

### Day of Action

In April of 2021, employees virtually volunteered during UWM's Day of Action, which supported nonprofits and communities on the frontlines of the pandemic. Through the event, Team Blue:

- Donated 133 hygiene, stress relief and outreach kits to the Nebraska Urban Indian Health Coalition, Latino Center for the Midlands and New Visions
- Created 31 cards thanking those on the frontlines of the pandemic, including health care workers, grocery store employees, firefighters and EMTs
- Matched community members' purchase of 250 literacy kits for elementary students in need (donating 525 in total) literacy kits purchased by community members for students in need

### Day of Caring

Twenty-six employees gave their time during UWM's Day of Caring event on Sept. 17, at three nonprofit organizations: Visiting Nurse Association, Together Inc. and Family Inc.

## TEAM BLUE IN ACTION



### American Red Cross

BCBSNE hosts quarterly blood drives at its building and invites employees and their spouses to donate. In 2021, employees donated 63 units of blood in total.





### Salvation Army

Spreading holiday cheer is an annual tradition for BCBSNE employees. In 2021, we supported two of the Salvation Army's programs: Adopt-a-Family and Bell Ringing, purchasing gifts for those in need and raising funds to support the nonprofit's local community initiatives.



### Volunteer Events

BCBSNE encourages teams to organize volunteer activities to build camaraderie while making a difference. In 2021, our interns bonded while volunteering at the Salvation Army and members of our leadership development program sorted donations at Food Bank for the Heartland. These are just a few examples of how Team Blue gave back to the community together.



### Employee Giving

We believe in supporting the causes near and dear to our employees' hearts and offer a gift matching program to amplify employees' personal donations to qualifying nonprofits. In 2021, BCBSNE matched more than \$11,000 in donations to 35 organizations.

**\$11,000**

in individual donations were matched by the company

# Community Events and Sponsorships

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Flu Shot Clinics

BCBSNE hosted 15 flu vaccination clinics in early October, in collaboration with YMCAs across the state and Hy-Vee Pharmacy. Clinics were open to everyone age six and up at no cost to them, and approximately 400 shots were provided through these events.

Additionally, BCBSNE made 10,000 vaccinations available to children and families in the Tri-Cities area, in partnership with the Central District Health Department and Grand Island Public Schools.

10,400  
FLU SHOTS

### National Walk at Lunch Day

Expanding on our partnership, YMCAs across the state joined BCBSNE for the first time in encouraging Nebraskans to stride toward better health and a stronger community on Wednesday, April 28 for National Walk at Lunch (NW@L) Day. For the 2021 event:

- 27,870 Nebraskans participated
- 146 companies and schools took the NW@L Day pledge
- BCBSNE donated more than \$5,000 to Special Olympics Nebraska on behalf of walkers

27,870  
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## SPONSORSHIPS



combined health  
agencies drive

### Combined Health Agencies Drive

Combined Health Agencies Drive (CHAD) is a local organization that has been raising funds with and for Nebraska's premier statewide health charities since 1972. It has 23 member agencies under its umbrella, which support Nebraska's most vulnerable populations. BCBSNE's sponsorship directly benefits the missions of each of the health charities, as well as enhances CHAD's existing inter-agency collaboration, community awareness, education and fundraising efforts.

## CHAD MEMBER AGENCIES

ALS Association Mid-America Chapter  
Alzheimer's Association Nebraska Chapter  
American Lung Association in Nebraska  
Arthritis Foundation Nebraska  
Autism Action Partnership  
Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska  
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, Nebraska/Iowa Chapter  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Nebraska Chapter  
Epilepsy Foundation  
JDRCF Nebraska, Southwest Iowa Chapter  
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Nebraska Chapter  
March of Dimes, Nebraska & Western Iowa Market  
Muscular Dystrophy Association of Nebraska  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Mid America Chapter  
Nebraska AIDS Project  
Nebraska Chapter of the National Hemophilia Foundation  
Nebraska Community Blood Bank  
Nebraska Health Care Foundation  
Nebraska Hospice and Palliative Care Association  
Nebraska Kidney Association  
Susan G. Komen® Great Plains  
Team Jack Foundation  
United Cerebral Palsy of Nebraska

### Support for Providers

We're there with and for Nebraska's health care providers at fundraising, networking, staff well-being and continuing education activities. In 2021, BCBSNE sponsored or made donations to the following events and organizations:

- Antelope County Healthcare Foundation Golf Tourney
- Fillmore County Hospital Foundation Golf Tournament
- Healthcare Financial Management Association
- Jefferson Community Health and Life Charity Golf Tournament
- Lexington Regional Health Center Golf Tournament
- Nebraska Dental Association Annual Meeting
- Nebraska Hospital Association, including Annual Convention in October
- Nebraska Medical Association, including Annual Membership Meeting in September
- Nebraska Public Health Conference
- OneWorld Health Center Staff Meal Donations

### Thank You Tuesdays

BCBSNE sponsored the Omaha Storm Chasers' Thank You Tuesday games at Werner Park during the team's 2021 season. Each of these games honored frontline workers from different industries. Through this sponsorship, BCBSNE donated 2,000 free tickets to help 67 organizations take their employees out to the ball game and enjoy a well-deserved break.

### Races Across the State

BCBSNE has a long-standing tradition of supporting events that encourage movement. In 2021, we hit a new stride by becoming Born & Raced in Nebraska's (BRIN) presenting sponsor. BRIN hosts three unique 10K races a year, including Leprechaun Chase, Cornfield Cornfield and Harvest Moon Hustle, drawing runners in with opportunities to wear costumes, enjoy an adult beverage and more.






In addition to powering the BRIN running series, BCBSNE also sponsored:

- Boys Town National Research Hospital's Memorial Day Run
- American Lung Association's Fight for Air Corporate Cup
- University of Nebraska at Omaha's Claussen-Leahy Maverick Run



## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

BCBSNE is proud to provide health insurance coverage for Nebraska's teachers through the Educators Health Alliance (EHA). Additionally, we believe creating a brighter future for our state includes being there for the next generation of Nebraskans. In 2021, we supported students and teachers through the following philanthropic initiatives:

 <p><b>\$1,000</b></p> <p>grant to Sutherland Public Schools' physical education department for participating in NW@L Day. BCBSNE awards a grant to one participating school each year.</p>	<p><b>\$10,000</b> donated to 18 Nebraska school districts, which used the funds to purchase winter clothing items to keep students warm.</p>	
<p><b>\$5,000</b></p> <p>grant made in partnership with the Nebraska Council of School Administrators to Pediatric Cancer Action Network, which reduces the financial burden on families battling pediatric cancer.</p>	<p><b>9 years</b></p> <p>as an employer partner of the Avenue Scholars program, which helps Omaha-area students prepare and enter financially-sustaining, high-demand careers. Avenue Scholars at BCBSNE are part of the company's overall internship program, which provides opportunities for students to attend informational seminars, support their BCBSNE department and volunteer together.</p>	<p><b>\$2,500</b> </p> <p>donation to support the Building Healthy Families program in Grand Island Public Schools. Building Healthy Families is a pediatric weight management program designed to help children and their families make healthier choices.</p>
<p><b>\$16,900</b></p> <p>grant to Hayward Elementary School for the purchase of new equipment for its physical education department. The funds enabled the school to partner with Project Fit America, a national nonprofit devoted to encouraging kids to become healthier and more active.</p>		<p><b>13,672</b> </p> <p>yard signs distributed thanking Nebraska educators for their dedication to students.</p>
<p><b>390 students</b></p> <p>at Conestoga Elementary School supplied with notebooks, folders, crayons and more in August of 2021 for the new academic year through BCBSNE's annual school supply drive. In addition to the items donated, our employees raised \$1,050 to put toward teachers' highly requested items, such as tissues and sanitizing wipes.</p>	<p><b>34,176</b> </p> <p>children screened by the Nebraska Lions Foundation Mobile Screening Unit, sponsored by BCBSNE. The Nebraska Lions travel the state to provide free vision and hearing screenings at schools, offices and events to improve the lives of children and adults.</p>	<p><b>300</b> </p> <p>backpacks created for CASA for Douglas County's 2021 Project Hope Pack Drive. BCBSNE was one of seven Omaha-area businesses that teamed up to build the packs, which contained essential hygiene and comfort items, such as shampoo, crayons, stuffed animals and more, to be distributed to children in crisis situations.</p>
		<p><b>1,100+</b></p> <p>educators joined BCBSNE's EHA Population Health program, launched in 2021. This program connects participants with a BCBSNE nurse health coach to create a personalized plan to lower health risks, navigate the health care system and meet wellness goals.</p>

# Advancing Health Equity

As a leader in the health insurance industry, we believe it is our duty to facilitate change and advance health equity, so all Nebraskans have access to the patient-focused care they need to live happy and healthy lives.

In 2021, BCBSNE took several steps to support equitable care:

## Healthy Blue Partnership

On Jan. 1, 2021, the Nebraska Heritage Health Medicaid program health plan known as WellCare was officially renamed Healthy Blue to reflect a new alliance between BCBSNE and Community Care Health Plan of Nebraska, Inc. The rebranding highlighted the strength of the partnership and extended brand stability and recognition of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) name to Nebraska's Medicaid-eligible population.



**We have been here for millions of Nebraskans throughout their health journeys and believe that ensuring care access and equity is fundamental to the health and well-being of our communities. In collaboration with a fellow industry leader, we look forward to equipping more people across our state with the power and peace of mind a Blue card provides.**

### STEVE GRANDFIELD

President and  
CEO of BCBSNE

## Strides in Maternal Health

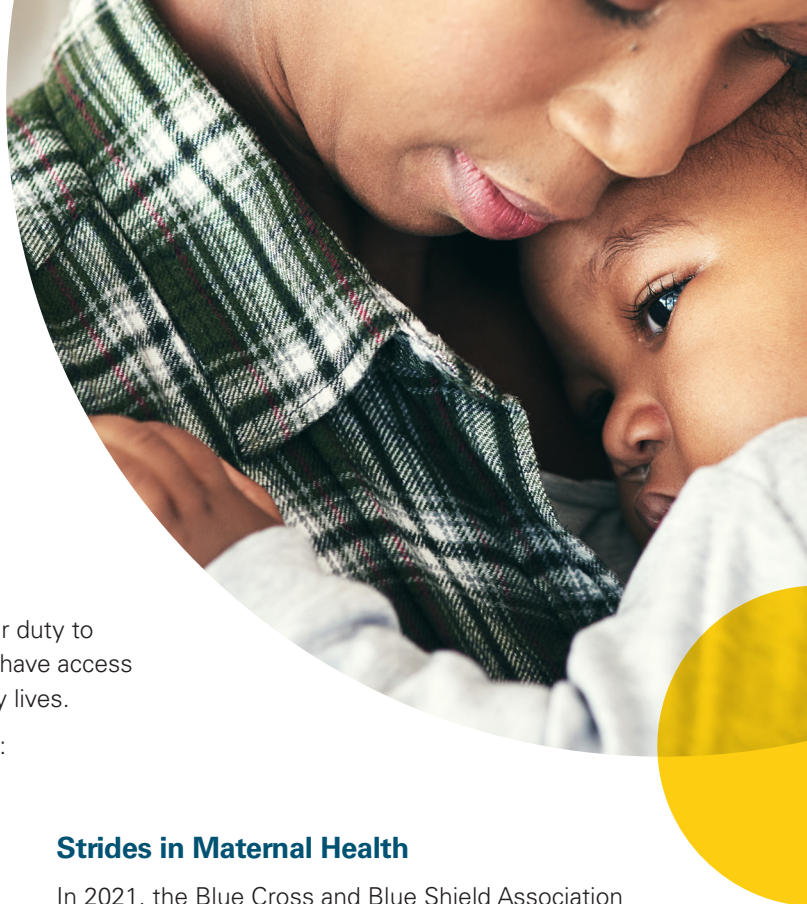
In 2021, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) announced a National Health Equity Strategy to confront racial health disparities, building on the pledge for meaningful change that we and all 36 BCBS companies made in 2020.

Part of the strategy includes a goal to reduce racial disparities in maternal health care by 50% in five years. We have taken these steps at a local level:

- **Providing maternal and child health equity training** to 40 employees. This training, hosted by CityMatCH, shared how maternal health inequalities came to be and how they persist today.
- **Sponsoring Nebraska Black Maternal Health Month**, in October. Dr. Josette Gordon-Simet, senior medical director at BCBSNE, joined a panel discussion hosted by I Be Black Girl, a collective creating space for Black women and girls to grow, connect and give.

## Expanding Diabetes Management Solutions

The financial burden of diabetes is substantial. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people with diagnosed diabetes have on average 2.3 times higher medical costs than those without the disease. In 2022 in addition to a suite of programs to help manage or reverse all types of diabetes, BCBSNE launched a \$0 cost-share insulin benefit, making it possible for diabetic members covered under a fully insured employer health plan to obtain preferred insulin listed on the company's drug list at no cost to them.







# Awards and Recognition

BCBSNE WAS HONORED TO WIN THE FOLLOWING AWARDS IN 2021:

- American Marketing Association – Pinnacle Award – Medicare Advantage Total Marketing Campaign
- Best of Omaha – Health Insurance – First Place Winner
- Forbes – America’s Best Mid-Sized Employers – #11
- Forbes – America’s Best-In-State Employers – #3
- Greater Omaha Chamber Business Excellence Award
- National Safety Council Nebraska – Safest Companies with Distinction Award
- Omaha’s Choice Awards – First Choice in Health Insurance
- Public Relations Society of America – Paper Anvil Award of Distinction – Marketing Consumer Services – Your Story Campaign
- Public Relations Society of America – Paper Anvil Award of Merit – Events and Observances – 2020 Flu Shot Clinics
- Public Relations Society of America – Paper Anvil Award of Merit – Marketing Consumer Services – EHA Summer Health Campaign







Thank you  
for letting us  
be part of  
*your story.*  
Nebraska.

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To learn more about how BCBSNE supports people's health journeys, visit **[NebraskaBlue.com/YourStory](https://NebraskaBlue.com/YourStory)**. These are real-world examples from BCBSNE members, like Doug – a heart attack survivor – of how we are there for our members when they need us.



**BlueCross BlueShield**  
Nebraska

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.  
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