



News Release

For Immediate Release:

April 4, 2008

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Let's go for a walk!

*Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska Employees Join Thousands of Americans on
National Walk @ Lunch DaySM April 30*

[Omaha] – Businesses all over Nebraska are encouraging their employees to take a 30 minute walk on their lunch break, Wednesday, April 30. They'll be joining tens of thousands of Americans across the country participating in the second annual **National Walk @ Lunch Day**.

The heart of Nebraska's walk will be at the Omaha headquarters of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska at 72nd and Mercy Streets, where hundreds of employees will be stepping out. A similar walk will take place at the Nebraska Unicameral. Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey is one of the many who have already committed to slipping on their sneakers on April 30. Any Nebraska organization is encouraged to participate. All promotional materials and walk specifics are at www.bcbsne.com.

National Walk @ Lunch Day is a workplace walking program which encourages people to take time during their lunch breaks to start walking toward better health. Most American schedules are built around the workday, so **National Walk @ Lunch Day** is designed to fit into – not compete with – the daily routine. Many employers are supporting **National Walk @ Lunch Day** by encouraging their workforces to participate.

The national walking effort is the next step of **WalkingWorks**[®], a Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association program to help Americans live healthier lives and reduce unnecessary medical costs due to physical inactivity. The **WalkingWorks** program was developed in partnership with the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

“Census data in Nebraska shows the leading causes of death in our state are directly related to obesity and lack of physical activity,” says Lee Handke, vice president, Health Network and Wellness Services at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska. “As a customer-first, wellness-focused company, we see the National Walk @ Lunch event as a tremendous opportunity to kick off employee walking programs and bring the message home of just how simple it can be to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the cost to treat illness and chronic disease caused by inactive lifestyles is nearly \$1,000 for every family in America, every year. Simply getting 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, such as a brisk walk, at least five times a week has significant health benefits, such as lowering the risk of developing or dying from cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes and improving the health of muscles, bones and joints. *[Source: Physical Activity and Health, A Report of the Surgeon General, 1996]*

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, insures or provides benefit administration to more than 717,000 people. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska is a mutual insurance company committed to delivering the health and wellness solutions that people value most.

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