



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Nebraska**

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Innovative programs to spur wellness in Greater Nebraska *\$50,000 in grants will support community health and wellness programs*

June 6, 2008 (Omaha, NE)—From “Fit Farmers” to the “2009 Pound Plunge”, Nebraskans have demonstrated their creativity in vying for thousands of dollars in wellness grants from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska. The nine winners of the **2008 Blue Health Advantage Wellness Grants** will share grants totaling \$50,000. In this inaugural year for the program, the winners are:

Location	Program	Award
Chadron	Lifespan Wellness Walking Routes	\$10,000
Loup City	“Stay in the Loup” Wellness Prgm	\$5,000
Central City	MAGIC School Education Program	\$5,000
Hastings	Bienstar De Por Vida	\$5,000
North Platte	Pound Plunge 2009	\$5,000
David City	Step It Up! School Program	\$6,500
Gering/Mitchell	Healthy Families Project	\$6,000
McCook	FIT McCook Walking Trails	\$5,000
Holdrege	“Fit Farmers” Exercise Club	\$2,500

Further details on these winning programs are enclosed.

Dozens of non-profit organizations applied for the **2008 Blue Health Advantage Wellness Grants**. “We were very impressed with all of the excellent ideas proposed for the grants,” says Celann LaGreca, vice president, Community Investment. “It was difficult to choose, but we believe that our nine winners show the greatest promise for bettering the health and well-being of community residents outside of the Omaha/Lincoln metropolitan areas.”

The Blue Health Advantage Wellness Grant Program was established in 2008 to support health and wellness programs statewide, especially in Greater Nebraska. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska representatives will be traveling the state this summer to visit the communities and deliver checks to the winners.

For More Information, Contact:

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Studies¹ show that the three leading causes of death in Nebraska are linked to obesity and lack of physical activity. Among Nebraskans, 30% of women and nearly 44% of men struggle with obesity², which puts them at greater risk for heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and cancer. Says LaGreca: "Choosing wellness is a lifestyle decision. If we can bring it closer to home, we anticipate greater success."

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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¹"Nebraska Health Information Project: 2005 Data Book," p.141 "Health Status"

²"Nebraska Office on Women's Health Annual Report 2006-2007," p. 9 "Behavioral Risk Factors"

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