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Blue Shield of California Foundation to Help Counties Plan for Health Coverage Expansions

New grants will help counties build a bridge to reform

San Francisco, September 21, 2010 — Today Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF) announced that it is investing \$1.9 million to help 12 counties plan for expansions in public health coverage, building a bridge to the coverage expansions envisioned under federal health reform that will take effect in 2014. The grants were issued as part of the Foundation's third quarter grantmaking, which totaled \$2.98 million (details on other grants below).

Participating counties include **Alameda, Fresno, Merced, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Yolo.**

"California's counties have a unique opportunity to expand health coverage to thousands of people who need it today," said Peter Long, president and CEO of BSCF. "I applaud the initiative that county and state leaders are showing to expand access to care in their communities. Our Foundation is pleased to support their efforts."

State and federal leaders are negotiating a new Section 1115 Medicaid Waiver that will make it possible for counties to obtain new federal funds to help cover legal, low-income residents. The new waiver will expand the ability of counties to match their existing indigent care funding with federal Medicaid funds to pay for county-based coverage initiatives.

"Expanding our successful Health Care Coverage Initiative program is an important goal of California's proposed Medicaid waiver, which will serve as a bridge to health care reform," said David Maxwell-Jolly, director of the California Department of Health Care Services. "The expansion will allow us to serve more of our most vulnerable Californians by enrolling certain childless adults and others who meet the proposal's more inclusive eligibility standards. We are extremely grateful for the support from Blue Shield of California Foundation to help ensure that counties have the planning resources they need to take advantage of this opportunity to improve and expand our programs for the uninsured."

The new planning grants will allow counties to develop and demonstrate their capacity to deliver care more effectively and efficiently. For example, counties will be using the grants to incorporate best practices for creating coverage expansion programs and developing integrated systems of safety net providers. The grants will help counties make the transition to providing better preventive and coordinated care to residents who now get episodic care, at best.

"Too many people in Riverside can't afford to see a doctor when they are sick," said Doug Bagley, chief executive officer at Riverside County Regional Medical Center. "This initiative will allow us to provide a more comprehensive system of health care and community services to those in need in our county."

The specific grant awards are:

Sacramento Valley

Placer County Health and Human Services: \$108,000
County of **Sacramento**: \$225,000
County of **Yolo**: \$125,000

Central California

County of **Fresno**: \$165,000
Merced County Department of Public Health: \$195,000
County of **San Luis Obispo**: \$90,000
County of **Santa Barbara** Public Health Department : \$80,000
Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency: \$125,000

San Francisco Bay Area

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency: \$200,000
San Francisco Department of Public Health: \$225,000
Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System: \$150,000

Southern California

Riverside County Regional Medical Center: \$225,000

Other Grants Announced

The Foundation's overall grants in the third quarter total \$2.98 million. In addition to the grants to counties, BSCF also awarded the following:

- Nearly \$600,000 to the **California Primary Care Association** and **California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems** to help community clinics and public hospitals coordinate and integrate with other safety net providers in order to ensure access to high-quality care for all Californians under a reformed healthcare system.

- \$300,000 to the **California School Health Centers Association** to strengthen and expand school-based health care in California.
- \$180,000 to **Alternatives to Domestic Violence** for the Military Families Initiative, a family violence prevention treatment program for military families in Riverside County – and to share this information with California domestic violence service providers, other civilian agencies, and military organizations.

About Blue Shield of California Foundation

Blue Shield of California Foundation is one of the largest healthcare grantmaking organizations in California. For more information, visit:

www.blueshieldcafoundation.org. The Foundation was formed by Blue Shield of California, a not-for-profit corporation with more than 3.4 million members, 4,800 employees, and 20 offices throughout California. For more information about the company, please visit www.blueshieldca.com.

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