



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Minnesota**

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NEWS RELEASE

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Blue Cross Announces Sponsorship of New Bike Share Program in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (Sept. 2, 2009) — Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross), as part of its efforts to prevent obesity and other costly diseases today announced it will be the major sponsor of Nice Ride Minnesota. Nice Ride Minnesota — scheduled to launch next spring — will be the first large-scale bike share program of its kind anywhere in the country.

Blue Cross announced its sponsorship of Nice Ride Minnesota at its "*do. Walk do. Bike*" conference in Minneapolis. The statewide gathering is dedicated to showcasing what communities are doing to promote more walking and bicycling. Bike share programs similar to Nice Ride Minnesota have already proven successful in cities around the world, such as Barcelona, Paris and Montreal.

“We’re excited to be a part of this innovative program that makes it easier for Minnesotans to be active in their daily lives, as our well-known *do.®* Campaign advocates,” said Patrick Geraghty, president and CEO, Blue Cross. “With two-thirds of Minnesotans overweight or obese, we need creative solutions such as Nice Ride to put the brakes on this trend. Public bicycle-sharing can help more Minnesotans lead active and healthy lifestyles, starting with downtown workers and the students, staff and faculty on the University of Minnesota campus.”

Nice Ride Minnesota will allow people to keep their cars parked and use bicycles for short trips around the city. Users pay a \$5 daily fee via credit card or purchase a \$60 annual subscription to take a bike from one locked Nice Ride Minnesota kiosk and return it to another near their destination. It’s simple and convenient for appointments, quick errands, going to lunch or even exploring the city.

Nice Ride Minnesota received a \$1.75 million award from Bike Walk Twin Cities, a federally-funded initiative to increase biking and walking and reduce driving in Minneapolis and neighboring communities. When the bike share system initially launches, 1,000 bicycles will be dispersed among 80 kiosks around downtown Minneapolis, Uptown and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus. Future plans call for the bike share program to expand to St. Paul and other high-density Twin Cities neighborhoods.

“Blue Cross’ sponsorship of Nice Ride Minnesota demonstrates their leadership and commitment to the health and vitality of our community,” said Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak. “I encourage other forward-thinking companies to financially support Nice Ride and join us in bringing about a new era of active, healthy and green transportation in Minneapolis.”

Blue Cross’ sponsorship is funded through its Prevention Minnesota initiative. Funded entirely by Blue Cross’ settlement proceeds from its historic lawsuit against the tobacco companies, Prevention Minnesota works to tackle preventable heart disease and cancers by addressing their root causes — physical inactivity, unhealthy eating and tobacco use. Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating combined contribute to obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Together, they are the second leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States.

For information and updates about Nice Ride visit www.niceridemn.com or check out Blue Cross’ prevention efforts at www.bluecrossmn.com/preventionminnesota.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, with headquarters in the St. Paul suburb of Eagan, was chartered in 1933 as Minnesota’s first health plan and continues to carry out its charter mission today: to promote a wider, more economical and timely availability of health services for the people of Minnesota. A nonprofit, taxable organization, Blue Cross is the largest health plan based in Minnesota, covering 2.8 million members in Minnesota and nationally through its health plans or plans administered by its affiliated companies. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, headquartered in Chicago. Go to www.bluecrossmn.com to learn more about Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.