



**Blue Cross  
Blue Shield  
Blue Care Network**  
of Michigan

**Advancing Suicide  
Prevention™**

Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees  
of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***SAVING LIVES THROUGH DEPRESSION AWARENESS AND TREATMENT***

# ***BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MICHIGAN AND BLUE CARE NETWORK RAISE AWARENESS OF YOUTH DEPRESSION, SUICIDE AMONG HEALTH POLICY LEADERS THROUGHOUT STATE***

## ***Companies partner with national health policy magazine to combat suicide as the Number 3 killer of children in Michigan***

**DETROIT, Jan. 30, 2006** – Astoundingly, suicide is the Number 3 killer of children in Michigan\*. And efforts to prevent youth suicide in the state are being strengthened because of a new education partnership forged by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) and its HMO affiliate, Blue Care Network (BCN) of Michigan, with a national mental health policy magazine.

Thousands of Michigan stakeholders in school and healthcare settings will receive the upcoming youth-themed issue of *Advancing Suicide Prevention*, a professional publication that goes to 20,000 health policy leaders across the country. Funding from BCBSM/BCN will expand this core circulation by 5,000 additional professionals throughout the state. These include leaders and “gatekeepers” who can influence youth and policies affecting their well-being – school and university administrators and deans of students, school boards, school psychologists, social workers in school and hospital settings, municipal leaders, and other professionals throughout Michigan.

The Youth issue of *Advancing Suicide Prevention* magazine focuses on the crisis of suicide among youth populations, the role of schools, and issues that impede treatment of suicidal youths. It was published this month.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for Michigan young people – and that makes it a major public health problem in the state, according to health officials. Between the years 1999-2002, 583 Michigan youngsters age 10-24 died

by their own hand. Moreover, experts in suicide prevention say that many of these deaths – most of which are based in an underlying mental illness – can be prevented.

“Depression is a disease no one wants to talk about but it affects both young and old alike, often with tragic consequences,” states Beth Goldman, M.D., a medical consultant for the Blues and adjunct clinical assistant professor at the University of Michigan School of Medicine. “Untreated, depression can result in needless suffering and even suicide. Up to 80 percent of those who receive treatment recover, often within weeks.”

Dr. Goldman adds that it is estimated that as many as one in 33 children and one in eight youths age 9 through 17 suffer from depression. Once a young person experiences depression, he or she is at risk of another episode within five years.

Sheryl F. Lowe, BCBSM director of Health Policy and Social Mission, notes that “the company has an ongoing commitment to raise Michigan residents’ awareness of depression and its treatment and to helping direct those in need to sources of care.”

For more information about the Youth issue of Advancing Suicide Prevention Magazine, visit [www.advancingsp.com](http://www.advancingsp.com).

\* According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>, which notes that between the years 1999-2002 (the most recent year for which data is available), 583 children ages 10-24 in Michigan took their own lives.

#### **About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan**

*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, a nonprofit corporation, provides or administers health care benefits to more than 4.7 million members through a variety of plans: Traditional Blue Cross Blue Shield; Blue Preferred, Community Blue and Health Blue PPOs; Blue Choice Point of Service; Blue Care Network HMO and Flexible Blue Plans compatible with health savings accounts. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. As part of the Michigan Blues’ social mission to help improve the health status of state residents, the Blues fund activities that address four public health issues, among them depression awareness and treatment through its “Depression... Real. Common. Treatable.” public education campaign. For more company information, visit [bcbsm.com](http://bcbsm.com).*

#### **About Advancing Suicide Prevention**

*A unique strategic health policy magazine, Advancing Suicide Prevention presents the state of the science and policy on suicide prevention from diverse perspectives and for diverse audiences. These include over 20,000 leaders and key decision makers in health care, social and human services, policy development, advocacy, education and training, research, legal and judicial arenas, law enforcement, corrections, crisis intervention, risk management and pastoral counseling. This 36-page color magazine is published by PDV Communications, Inc., a Wisconsin-based magazine publisher serving the mental health and social services arenas. For more information, visit [www.advancingsp.com](http://www.advancingsp.com).*

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