



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Sara Mulder
651-662-2079 | sara.mulder@bluecrossmn.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blue Plus Adds Online Program for Mental Health Support

Learn to Live Now Available to Minnesota Health Care Program Enrollees

(Eagan, Minn.) August 20, 2020 – Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and Blue Plus (Blue Plus) today announced that more than 200,000 members enrolled in state medical assistance programs now have access to Learn to Live, an innovative online mental health program to help members living with stress, depression, substance use, insomnia and anxiety. This program is available at no additional cost for Blue Plus members ages 13 to 64 with a Minnesota Health Care Program plan.

“Access to mental health care and support is a top priority in serving this population and we are committed to removing barriers to care and providing additional resources like Learn to Live,” said Christine Reiten, vice president of Medicaid at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. “The need for increased support is particularly apparent as the uncertainty of COVID-19 and the resulting economic downturn has exacerbated existing racial and health disparities in underserved communities.”

Those who already have behavioral health conditions or who already experience disparities in health and economic status may be at greatest risk. A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that adults are experiencing raised levels of mental health conditions associated with COVID-19. The study showed that these issues were significantly higher among the following categories: younger adults, Black and Latino Americans; essential workers; and unpaid adult caregivers.ⁱ

“We’re seeing an increase in mobile phones used as a lifeline, so we know it’s critical to offer a resource that also presents incredibly well on mobile devices,” added Dale Cook, CEO and co-founder of Learn to Live. “We provide confidential support, powerful tools and convenient live services to help manage the myriad stressors of these times, and to empower people to build resilience and improve their emotional wellbeing. We look forward to working closely with the Blue Plus teams to support this expanded population.”

The Learn to Live programs can address these needs and can help members work through their mild to moderate stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia or substance use; and improve their overall emotional health. The programming is based on more than 10 years of clinical studies and grounded on the principles of cognitive behavioral therapy, an effective, evidence-based approach for mental health management. Learn to Live provides access to confidential, 24/7 online self-paced programs. Additionally, coaches and peer-to-peer support features can help keep members engaged.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota

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 2.9 million members in Minnesota and nationally through its health plans or plans administered by its affiliated companies. Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® of Minnesota and Blue Plus® are nonprofit independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, headquartered in Chicago.

About Learn to Live

Learn to Live is a leader in tackling mental health challenges through customizable and scalable consumer-centered technology — via both web and mobile delivery. Their programs are self-directed, providing self-help information and skill-building lessons based on the fundamentals of cognitive behavioral therapy. Their programs are designed to help individuals with stress, depression, social anxiety, insomnia, and substance use. The company designs solutions that reduce stigma, alleviate access barriers and limit financial concerns for those seeking help. Learn to Live has helped tens of thousands of individual consumers, and partners with organizational clients in the health plan, employment, and higher education sectors. Through these partnerships, Learn to Live now assists over 3 million members. For more information visit www.learntolive.com

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Learn to Live, Inc. is an independent company providing online cognitive behavioral therapy programs and services.

HMO Minnesota, d.b.a. Blue Plus, is an affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.

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ⁱ Czeisler MÉ , Lane RI, Petrosky E, et al. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1049–1057. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6932a1>