



Community Impact

2024 REPORT



A welcome message from Dr. Edwards

At Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, we are dedicated to enhancing the health and wellbeing of our communities, making them better places to live, work, and raise families. Our commitment extends beyond health care; we strive to address health disparities, social factors affecting health, and discrimination impacting our members and their neighborhoods.

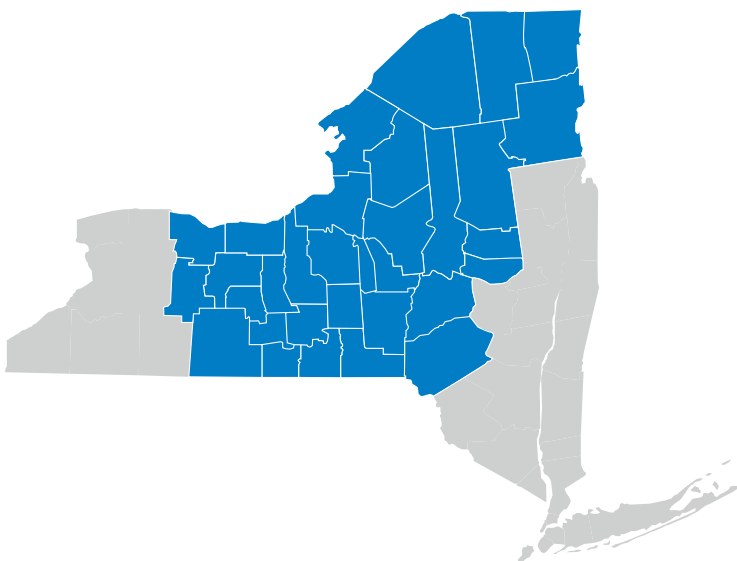
To achieve this, we focus on advancing our nonprofit mission by providing intentional community-based funding and fostering trusted relationships that improve community health. By building strong partnerships with local organizations, we tackle health challenges head on. Together, we work to improve access to care, connect individuals to essential resources, and promote healthy habits, ensuring that we are the trusted community partner in advancing health care outcomes.

We take pride in our accomplishments and the positive impact we continue to make. This community report highlights the initiatives and collaborations that are transforming lives and strengthening communities. Together, we are paving the way for a healthier future for everyone.



Simone E. Edwards, DrPH, MPH

*VP, Health Equity & Community Investments
Excellus BlueCross BlueShield*



Mission

To help people in our communities live healthier and more secure lives through access to high-quality, affordable health care.

Vision

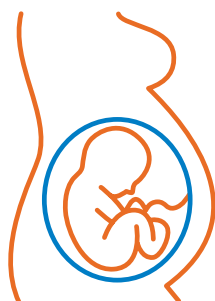
To be recognized and valued as THE community and business resource for health care security through financial strength, effective cost control, ease of use and commitment to health improvement.



Community Investments and Partnerships:

We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our communities, making them better places to live, work, play, and raise families. Our goal is to help important community programs and create opportunities that really make a difference.

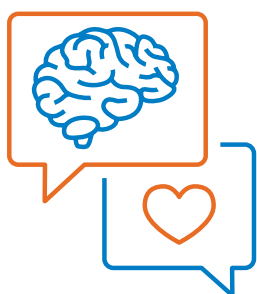
We focus on four main areas to guide our efforts:



Maternal Health



Chronic Condition Management



Mental & Behavioral Health



Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)



Sponsorships

We proudly support, through sponsorship, events that share our mission of promoting access to high-quality, affordable health care such as a fundraiser, health fair, health seminar, or other health-related events.



Central NY



Southern Tier

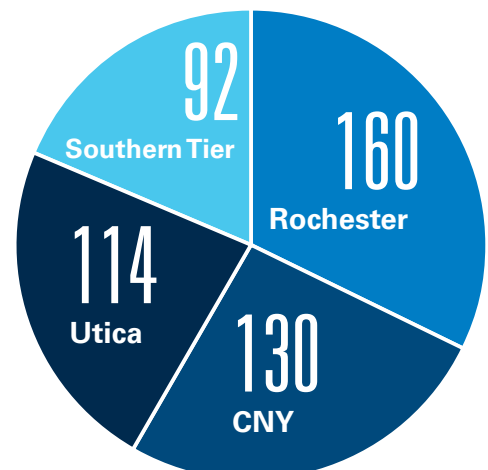


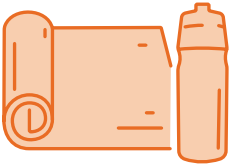
Rochester



Utica

The total number of proposals supported by the Community Investments and Partnerships team by region in 2024 includes sponsorships, Health and Wellness Awards, and Health Equity Innovation Awards.





Health & Wellness Awards

Our Health & Wellness Awards support programs and initiatives that improve health outcomes.

Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees - Women's Wellness Group

The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees received a Health and Wellness Award to support their Women's Wellness Group, which promotes mental health and social engagement among refugee and immigrant women. Coordinated by the Center's health access coordinator, the program includes group activities, education, and artistic activities focused on socialization. Each session begins with a health topic followed by a therapeutic craft, assisting participants in their integration process and fostering a healthy, culturally rich community.

“Many of the families that we encounter face the monumental task of starting their lives over in a new country with limited social and mental wellness support. This program provides these women with discussions around health topics and provides activities that allow them to socialize with other women who are facing similar obstacles in a new country.”

- **Shelly Callahan**, executive director at The Center



Lee Barta Community Center Food Pantry

We proudly support the Lee Barta Community Center's food pantry in Binghamton, NY, which plays a crucial role in a high-need area. By providing fresh and frozen items, dry food, nonperishables, and drinks, we help ensure families have access to nutritious options. The Center not only addresses food insecurity but also fosters a sense of community, creating a supportive environment for residents to connect and thrive.



Food Bank of Central New York

The Food Bank of Central New York collaborates with health care organizations to tackle the connection between nutrition and health. In partnership with Upstate Medical University, patients facing food insecurity are referred to an onsite pantry and the Food Bank's SNAP Outreach Department for resources. Each month, fresh produce distributions support at-risk patients or those with chronic conditions.

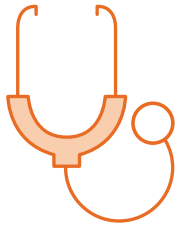
Recent funding enabled the Food Bank to distribute

590 boxes

of fresh produce, totaling

10,268 lbs

of healthy food, including zucchini, sweet potatoes and apples



Health Equity Innovation Awards

The Health Equity Innovation Awards support programs that make a real difference in health and outcomes. They focus on reducing health disparities to advance health equity for all people.

Seven Valleys Health Coalition

The Cortland County Postpartum Doula Program, in partnership with the Cayuga Community Health Network, Herkimer County Health Department, and Madison County Rural Health Council, launched the Seven Valleys Health Coalition Doula Partnership in 2022 to enhance maternal health. This free program offers birth and postpartum doula services to low-income families who struggle to access prenatal and postnatal support. Postpartum doulas aid new mothers and families, leading to better health outcomes for both mother and baby. Research shows that having a doula improves birth results, especially for those in low-income and rural areas.

“The Postpartum Doula Program is an exciting addition to our maternal health work here at Seven Valleys Health Coalition. Now we can provide pregnant individuals, and their families, support from pregnancy all the way through the first year after the baby is born. In our rural county, any additional support provided to new parents is invaluable to improving health outcomes.”

- **Kate Downes**, program manager



Arnot Health's MEAL Program

Arnot Health's Mindful Eating Healthy Lifestyle (MEAL) program targets childhood obesity and promotes health equity. By equipping children and families with the knowledge and resources to make healthy choices, the program encourages lifelong healthy habits. Research indicates that early exposure to healthy foods greatly influences children's dietary preferences and overall wellbeing, laying the groundwork for a healthier future.

“The program worked with children aged 3-4 years old, which is a young but great time to instill healthy habits. We also encourage the whole family to participate, involving parents to help them understand health and nutrition. We all know that good nutrition and physical activity will improve their health in the long run, and that is our goal.”

- **Tina Burt**, nurse practitioner and director of quality at Arnot Health



Sister Circle Doula Program

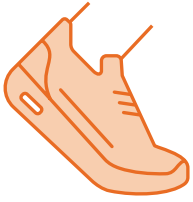
To tackle health disparities in the Black community, the Mohawk Valley Prenatal & Maternal Support (MVPMS) created the Sister Circle program. This initiative provides doula services to women of color, aiming to improve birth rates and outcomes while offering breastfeeding and postpartum support. Statistics reveal significant gaps in infant mortality rates and prenatal care for non-Hispanic Black families. The program trained 10 women of color in culturally sensitive doula practices, empowering them to assist with labor and postpartum needs.

Common Ground Health

Common Ground Health launched the “Get It Done” initiative to educate communities about health care. In Rochester, over 30 Black and Latino barbers and stylists serve as community health educators, boosting health knowledge and outreach. This initiative has successfully connected people with essential services, including support for domestic violence, mental health resources, and health screenings.

“We’ve found that when people come in to get their hair done or cut, they have conversations with their stylist about whatever issues they are going through personally and professionally.”

- **Jackie Dozier**,
director of community health and wellbeing
at Common Ground Health



Employee volunteerism

Employee volunteerism aligns with our company's vision and values of improving the health of our community. We provide employees with volunteer-time-off hours to cultivate community connections through volunteer service, engage with the community via board membership and help nurture meaningful community relationships.



Rochester



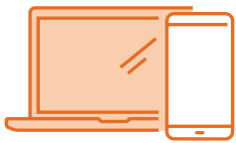
Southern Tier



Utica



Central NY



How to contact us

We are proud of the difference we are making in the community with the help of our partners, and we look forward to continuing to help people in our communities live healthier and more secure lives through access to high-quality, affordable health care.



Partner with us

Are you a community-based organization that provides health-related programs? Partner with us to create a greater impact together.



To learn more visit:

News.ExcellusBCBS.com/News-Room/Community-Investments-Partnerships



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