

## **The Shared Success of Capital Blue Cross and the Lehigh Valley**

*By Todd Shamash, President & CEO, Capital Blue Cross*

Look at any strong relationship – be it business, social, or personal – and you’ll likely find two common elements: reliability and trust.

We all want the peace of mind that comes from knowing we can depend upon each other, especially in the most challenging circumstances. The past few years have certainly presented challenges to our communities and businesses, and I’m proud to say Capital Blue Cross and the Lehigh Valley have proven once again to be trusted, reliable partners.

A year ago, as the pandemic finally began to wane and life slowly returned to normal, Capital, joined by many community leaders, proudly cut the ribbon on a newly renovated Lehigh Valley headquarters in Allentown. This multi-million dollar project wasn’t just about a building. It represented our ongoing commitment to and investment in the region’s residents, businesses, and overall quality of life.

Our headquarters renovation included the opening of the region’s second Capital Blue Cross Connect health and wellness center. These community-focused centers are open to the public, regardless of whether you’re a Capital Blue Cross member, and each center offers personal healthcare consultations, health coaching, fitness classes, wellness screenings, cooking and nutrition classes, and other community events. Coincidentally, the Lehigh Valley’s other Capital Blue Cross Connect – at The Promenade Shops at Saucon Valley – celebrates its 10th anniversary this month.

Capital also is proud to be the health plan of choice for many in the Lehigh Valley, ranging from individuals and small businesses to major employers and local government entities. To us, these relationships epitomize the trust you place in us.

One of the things I hear often – and Capital is always working to build on – is that we make it easy for people to understand how health insurance works. We pride ourselves on helping people find the best, most cost-effective ways to use their

insurance coverage for their benefit, whether we're talking to an employer, an individual, or a family.

Still, our connection with the Lehigh Valley goes beyond the traditional insurer-customer relationship. Capital also makes ongoing investments in the community meant to help every resident of the region, regardless of whether they carry a Capital Blue Cross insurance card.

Some of our current investments in community initiatives across the Lehigh Valley include:

- Addressing food insecurity by helping the Second Harvest Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley and Northeast Pennsylvania, which has provided more than 1.4 million pounds of food to families in need this year alone, and supporting local Meals on Wheels efforts to ensure vulnerable senior citizens receive balanced and nutritious meals.
- Supporting Lafayette College's Landis Center for Community Engagement and Office of Sustainability. Our support of Lafayette's LaFarm initiative provides community-focused fellowship opportunities in which student fellows grow, harvest, and distribute produce and support the Easton food pantry network.
- Providing funding to support the educational efforts of Equi-librium Inc., a Nazareth non-profit that serves children across the region through horse-related activities and therapies.
- Sponsoring the Dr. Aaron & Sarah Litwak Dental Clinic at Northampton Community College, which helps provide dental care to underserved, low-income community members.
- Promoting children's dental health through St. Luke's Mobile Dental Outreach Program and the Lehigh Valley Health Network's Miles of Smiles Dental Van, both of which provide free dental care to students. For the past 12 years, these programs provide dental services to every school in the Allentown School District, helping more than 13,000 students with more than 60,000 dental procedures. Our support of St. Luke's mobile dental services has helped more than 1,700 students in six counties across the region.
- Fostering economic growth through sponsorships of the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of

Commerce, and the Easton Farmers' Market through the Greater Easton Development Partnership.

- Supporting arts and cultural events like MusikFest, the Creativity Commons in Bethlehem's ArtsQuest Center, and programs and theater scholarships at Easton's historic State Theatre. Capital also is a founding partner of two of the area's favorite sports teams, the Lehigh Valley Phantoms and the Iron Pigs.

Capital has supported countless other events and organizations in and around the Lehigh Valley over the years, and we will continue to be an active participant in the region's vibrant growth and continued success.

We also will continue to be here for our members and for organizations like the Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare. You have placed your trust in Capital Blue Cross, and we will keep going the extra mile to ensure that trust is earned and deserved.