



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Minnesota**

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Karen Lyons 651-662-1415, [Karen\\_M\\_Lyons@bluecrossmn.com](mailto:Karen_M_Lyons@bluecrossmn.com)

Pam Lux 651-662-3959, [Pamela\\_G\\_Lux@bluecrossmn.com](mailto:Pamela_G_Lux@bluecrossmn.com)

## **Blue Cross' *do*<sup>®</sup> campaign highlights how Minnesotans tackle obesity**

*Moving more, eating better is key to better health*

EAGAN, Minn. (Nov. 30, 2009) — Local Millville resident Kathleen Evers, 52, stars in a new TV commercial, sharing how she met obesity head on and won. Kathleen's success story was selected out of numerous entries to be featured in Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota's (Blue Cross) new *do* campaign. The campaign is part of an aggressive effort to curb and reverse the state's increasing obesity trend. Slowing the rise of obesity is a critical issue in the state because more than 60 percent, approximately 2.4 million adult Minnesotans – are overweight or obese, resulting in increased risk for high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, osteoarthritis, and colon cancer.

People who need to lose weight often are overwhelmed by the prospect. Blue Cross' market research confirms many barriers exist, but health risks related to obesity are a top motivator for weight loss. The new *do* ad campaign features individual success stories and highlights how people overcame common barriers to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. The goal of the campaign is to inspire others to move more and eat less to achieve better health.

Kathleen's journey to better health began at age 48 when her physician told her she was dangerously and morbidly obese and she would need gastric bypass surgery if she wanted to live into her 50s. Kathleen had a host of health problems including borderline liver function and diabetes, poor bladder control, allergy and exercise induced asthma, severe sleep apnea, and needed knee replacements. Devastated that the physician felt gastric bypass surgery was her only option, and determined to make it into her 50s, Kathleen was motivated to lose weight without surgery.

Kathleen joined a fitness center that offered discounted memberships via her Blue Cross health plan. That motivated her to go at least 12 times a month and made it affordable. She was on the right track, losing nearly 50 lbs, when Kathleen was diagnosed with colon cancer. The cancer and chemo treatments led to cirrhosis of the liver and an enlarged heart. Despite this setback, her son urged her to continue her weight loss efforts. By setting small goals, increasing physical activity and improving eating habits, Kathleen is now 198 lbs. lighter and no longer has the long list of health conditions: no diabetes, normal liver function, no medication needed for bladder control, no knee replacements needed, no exercise induced asthma, and her heart is back to normal size. While Kathleen put in 100 percent of the effort, she credits the supportive people around her, including the owners of the gym where she's a member, with motivating her to succeed. "They saved my life by getting me to '*do*'. I now have both quality and quantity of life!"

"We've heard hundreds of inspiring stories like Kathleen's since the *do* campaign began and we wanted to find a way to showcase these stories so even more Minnesotans are motivated to be healthy," said Marc Manley, MD, chief prevention officer for Blue Cross.

*-more-*

“Losing weight and adopting a healthier lifestyle can seem overwhelming, but success can be easier if you don’t feel alone. Our new ad campaign is designed to build momentum and get friends, family and coworkers moving and doing something about obesity and its alarming upward trend,” Manley added.

Blue Cross is tackling obesity to improve the quality of life of Minnesotans and to address rising health care costs. Treating obesity related illness greatly strains our health care system. A 2008 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota report found that obesity was responsible for 27 percent of the recent increases in Minnesota’s health care costs, and will account for 31 percent of future increases – adding nearly \$1 billion to Minnesota’s total annual health care spending by 2010 and \$3.7 billion by 2020.

The **do** campaign is one of many ways Blue Cross is working to improve the health of Minnesotans. As part of Blue Cross’ Prevention Minnesota initiative, the **do** campaign is funded entirely by Blue Cross’ settlement proceeds from its historic lawsuit against the tobacco companies. Prevention Minnesota works to tackle the leading causes of preventable death and disease in Minnesota. Other programs and services to help members achieve and maintain a healthy weight include: free online health risk assessments and coaching modules, an online wellness center offering such tools as healthy eating plans and BMI calculators, discounts on Weight Watchers and fitness center membership, biking incentives such as “**do**-cycle,” a “Walking Works” walking program for employers, and more.

To view the commercials, and many other inspiring stories, visit the [do-groove.com](http://do-groove.com) website. People interested in sharing their personal story can submit it for inclusion on the site and also become a **do** campaign Facebook fan. For more information about Blue Cross’ many prevention efforts go to [www.bluecrossmn.com/preventionminnesota](http://www.bluecrossmn.com/preventionminnesota).

*do<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of Blue Cross and 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 2.8 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 a nonprofit independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association headquartered in Chicago. Go to [bluecrossmn.com](http://bluecrossmn.com) to learn more about Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.*