

A Note of Thanks and Hope from BCBSAZ CMO Dr. James Napoli



As we reach our one-year milestone of meeting the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to acknowledge the hard work and compassion of our provider partners, especially our frontline heroes. Your relentless and dedicated efforts in caring for patients have saved the lives of many Arizonans. You stood by thousands of patients and their families as they faced the worst ravages of this disease, offering them comfort and solace. Although the case numbers and hospitalizations have dropped in recent weeks, the virus continues to cause disruption and devastation. And we must all stay cautious and watchful of the new coronavirus strains that are emerging and posing unknown threats.

With the FDA emergency use authorization of effective vaccines, a new battle is underway on another front. Blue Cross® Blue Shield® of Arizona (BCBSAZ) has embarked on an all-out effort to ensure a successful vaccination campaign in Arizona. Below is some good news from Pam Kehaly, our CEO, about our involvement and how we're working alongside you and state leaders to help turn the corner on this pandemic.



Message from BCBSAZ CEO Pam Kehaly:
Delivering Hope Every 10 Seconds

By all accounts, Arizona has had a rough time through the COVID-19 pandemic. A staggering loss of more than 15,000 Arizonans, punctuated by devastating economic and mental health impacts, left our state reeling.

Vaccinations mean that hope is here, and Arizona's recovery has been jumpstarted with one of the highest volume, 24/7 vaccination sites in the country at State Farm Stadium in Glendale. With more than 8,000 vaccines administered every day ... about one every 10 seconds ... Arizonans have come together in a colossal act of love.

This is exactly why, when state leaders called on Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona to get involved in early January, we said "yes." In less than two weeks, we mobilized our team to join the single largest and most important public health effort our nation has seen during the pandemic. We mobilized to assist. We mobilized to serve. And most importantly, we mobilized to deliver hope.

We anticipated the huge effort, and are humbled to be part of this highly effective public-private partnership. What we did not anticipate was how much we would be touched by witnessing the absolute best of humanity in action. Thousands of individuals, most of whom are volunteers, have worked around the clock to help administer a dose of hope to more than 300,000 Arizonans in less than six weeks.

Working nine-hour shifts, some overnight, on their feet in the rain, sun, cold, and even desert hailstorms, these volunteers tell us how honored they are to serve in a role that has so much purpose. They experience words of thanks and tears of joy and relief every day, along with being witnesses to a monumental time in our country's history.

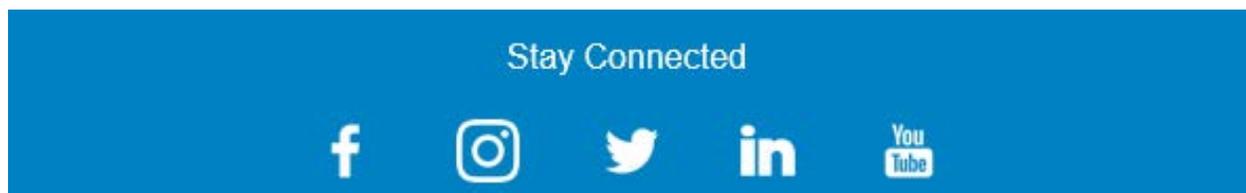
President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris recently took a virtual tour of the vaccination operations at State Farm Stadium. Calling the 24/7 vaccination operation "amazing," President Biden and Vice President Harris pointed to the teamwork as an example of unity, saying, "We have never failed as a country when we've done things together." Administering more than 20% of all COVID-19 vaccines in Arizona, the impressive vaccination results at State Farm Stadium to-date would not have been possible without a tireless team.

Together with federal partners, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Guard, along with state leadership from the Governor's Office, the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, and the Arizona Department of Health Services, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona employees and their families and friends have volunteered to help make this a national model of an efficient and streamlined vaccination clinic. We joined hospitals, the Arizona Cardinals, Arizona State University, Walgreens, the Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation, the City of Glendale, and more with the shared goal of working together to win the COVID-19 battle.

A true testament to the grit and resilience of our community, Arizona has managed to move from a time of hopelessness and uncertainty to becoming a role model of strength and unity. While we need to stay vigilant and still have a long road ahead, standing shoulder to shoulder against an enemy we cannot even see will lead us to victory. This is genuine, authentic love in action, and it changes us all for the better.

Pam Kehaly is President and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona.

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