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For Immediate Release

INDEPENDENCE BLUE CROSS FUNDS WEB-BASED SCHOOL WELLNESS PROGRAM

*Online tool will help schools better comply with federal and state health requirements,
and address serious student health and obesity issues*

Philadelphia, PA , May 21, 2007 — Obesity in children and adolescents is a serious health epidemic. According to the American Obesity Association, 30 percent of children between the ages 6 and 11 are overweight and more than 15 percent are obese. Overweight children have an increased risk of developing diabetes, asthma, and emotional problems. Sadly, today's youth may be the first generation with a shorter lifespan than their parents.

To help improve the health of approximately 665,000 students at 625 schools in the Philadelphia region, Independence Blue Cross (IBC) today announced that it will offer free to area schools a newly-developed Web-based software program that makes it easier for school nurses and administrators to reduce obesity and encourage young people to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Known as Health eTools for Schools, the secure software tool, which is accessed through a Web portal, can improve students' food choices, provide quality physical activities, and allow school administrators to more easily comply with federal and state mandates for measuring body mass index (BMI) and improving student wellness. This new resource will be provided by IBC to all public, private, parochial and charter schools in the five-county Philadelphia region beginning this fall through September 1, 2010.

School administrators and nurses from city schools will meet with IBC tomorrow to hear about the program and how to start using it to improve student health. Representatives from more than 60 suburban schools attended a similar event last week.

“As a corporate leader committed to improving the health and well-being of residents in our community, we're excited to bring this innovative program to our region's schools to help keep our children healthy,” said Joseph A. Frick, president and CEO of Independence Blue Cross.” For busy school administrators and teachers, Health eTools will simplify their efforts to improve students' nutrition and fitness.”

Although the Web tool is new, local schools are already expressing interest in how it can help them better manage student wellness.

“I've been waiting for a program like this my entire career, and I can't wait to implement this in our school,” said Ginny Ward, a health and physical education teacher from the North Penn school district in Lansdale, PA, who

Independence Blue Cross offers products directly, through its subsidiaries Keystone Health Plan East and QCC Insurance Company, and with Highmark Blue Shield— independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

attended the introductory meeting last week. “Health eTools will help us follow state mandates in an easy and coordinated way and ultimately improve student health. When we make our students healthier, better academics will naturally follow.”

How Health eTools for Schools Works

The three-year IBC subsidy for Health eTools for Schools is being made through a licensing agreement with InnerLink, Inc., which developed the Web tool for the Highmark Foundation, a charitable organization and affiliate of Highmark, Inc. Based in Lancaster, PA, InnerLink, Inc. provides educational resources and cutting-edge technology to help schools comply with wellness policy requirements and enable better nutrition and physical activity for children.

For example, school nurses can conduct and record physical health screenings, including BMI — which schools must now measure and report to parents annually — much faster and often more accurately using the Health eTools for School software. Student health information can be collected using a handheld computer and quickly uploaded to online student health records.

“By educating our youth early in life about the benefits of eating wisely and being active, we can help create healthier adults,” said Dr. Richard Snyder, senior vice president, IBC Health Services, who leads the Health eTools project. “Additionally, we believe that healthier students are less likely to be absent from school, pay better attention in class, and may even earn better grades, which makes for happier schools for everyone.”

The content for the Health eTools for Schools programs are aligned with Pennsylvania academic standards, and proven through scientific trial to foster improved nutrition and better understanding of the importance of exercise. Content from national partners such as the National Institutes of Health enables districts to bring nutrition and physical education concepts alive for students in grades K-12.

“We are very excited to partner with Independence Blue Cross and we applaud the company for taking a proactive role in helping address the very serious issues relating to student health, and in particular, childhood obesity,” said Martha Harris, InnerLink, Inc. cofounder and managing director of Coordinated School Health. “Offering this tool to hundreds of area schools is an important step toward creating more productive learners with reduced health risks.”

For more information about how schools can register for the Health eTools for Schools program, call 800-988-6983 or visit <https://ibx.healthtoolsforschools.org>.

About Independence Blue Cross

Independence Blue Cross is the leading health insurer in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Nationwide, IBC and its affiliates provide coverage to nearly 3.4 million people. For nearly 70 years, Independence Blue Cross has offered quality health care products and services tailored to meet the changing needs of members, employers, groups and providers. For more information on Independence Blue Cross, visit www.ibx.com.

About InnerLink, Inc.

Lancaster, PA-based InnerLink, Inc. founded in 2001, provides a wide range of health and safety technology solutions for schools, communities and health care professionals across the United States. InnerLink’s products include web-based wellness curriculum for the education market; portal technology that allows school districts to manage system-wide Coordinated School Health programs, policies and student health records; online personal electronic health records that allow users to manage their own health information and carry it with them 24/7; and portal solutions for organizations and communities to manage disaster preparedness planning, response and recovery. For more information, visit: www.TheInnerLink.com.