WASHINGTON (December 16, 2019) – The American Hospital Association’s Institute for Diversity and Health Equity (IFDHE) and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) today announced a joint collaboration and one-year grant program to support hospitals in eliminating health care disparities and working toward ensuring individuals in every community receive safe, equitable and high-quality care. Program funding will support efforts that are focused on maternal and child health, pediatric asthma, adult diabetes, breast cancer and geographic disparities, including rural access to care. Thirteen hospitals will have an opportunity to participate in the program.

AHA member hospitals that are part of a BCBSIL provider network are eligible to apply for grant awards ranging from $25,000 to $100,000, dependent upon the level of programming implemented. Grant recipients also will receive technical assistance from the IFDHE through telephonic and online coaching sessions. Proposals are due January 27, and grant awards will be announced by IFDHE in March.

“It is essential to reduce health inequities and increase access to care in communities, and this innovative grant offers a unique opportunity for providers and payers to work together toward these shared goals,” said Jay Bhatt, D.O., senior vice president and chief medical officer at the AHA.

“We’re excited to partner with the AHA to empower hospitals with the additional tools they need to ensure equitable health outcomes for our members and communities across Illinois,” said Derek J. Robinson, M.D., vice-president and chief medical officer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois. “This new grant program is part of our broader health equity strategy, which includes innovative partnerships with providers to reduce health care disparities and increase opportunities for all people to achieve their best possible health.”
More information on the grant is available here.

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**About the American Hospital Association**
The AHA is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the health improvement of their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, which include nearly 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks, other providers of care and 43,000 individual members. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides insight and education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends. For more information, visit the AHA website at [www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org).

**About the Institute for Diversity and Health Equity**
The Institute for Diversity and Health Equity, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, works closely with health services organizations to advance health equity for all and to expand leadership opportunities for ethnic minorities in health management. For more information, visit [www.diversityconnection.org](http://www.diversityconnection.org).

**About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois**
[Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL)](http://www.bcbsil.com) is committed to expanding access to quality, cost-effective health care to as many people as possible in Illinois. BCBSIL is dedicated to innovation and exploring, nurturing and activating future possibilities to make the health care system work better for our members and our communities. BCBSIL is a division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company and an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.