

# quick connections

March 24, 2000

## BCBSF favorable image rises

*Consumers' favorable rating of BCBSF rose to the highest level ever, 75 percent, our January image tracking survey shows. The number of people who have seen, read or heard something about BCBSF increased significantly, contributing to the favorable rating. Many mentioned our advertising campaign and the United Way donation.*

*BCBSF conducts the survey semi-annually to gauge changes in attitude toward the company and the health care industry. From Jan. 17 – 20, 850 Floridians were polled; 372 were BCBSF members.*

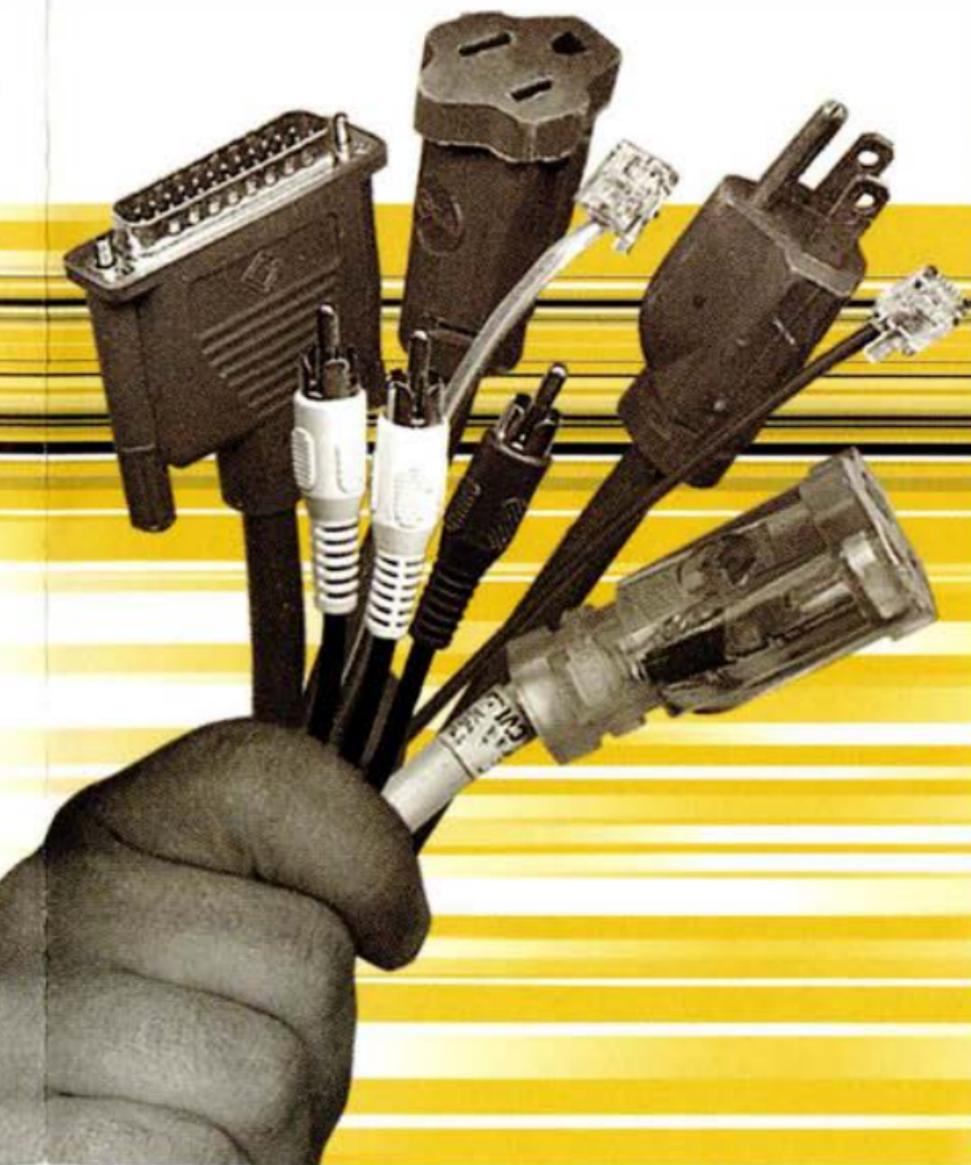
*This is a tremendous increase from the company's low of 60 percent favorable in August 1999, the last time the poll was conducted. The August decline may have been attributable to heightened publicity about HMO reform. All 12 health care plans included in the recent survey enjoyed a rise in favorable ratings, ranging from 9 to 19 percent.*

*BCBSF continues to lead the competition by a solid margin, scoring high on choice and reliability. Negative comments about BCBSF were mostly cost-related.*

*On general health care topics, quality of care continues to be consumers' top*

*(Continued on next page.)*

**Quick Connections is available online at Corporate Information/Blue Views on the company Intranet.**



**Image survey** (continued)

priority, though affordability has surged to a close second. About half of respondents reported having some level of difficulty with health care costs.

In general, HMOs continue to suffer from image problems. Twice as many consumers view HMOs negatively (48 percent) vs. positively (24 percent). Most (57 percent) are neutral or have no opinion about PPOs. But among those consumers with an opinion about PPOs, more than twice as many (29 percent) feel positively vs. negatively (13 percent). Traditional health plans maintain a solid image (42 percent favorable vs. 18 percent negative).

**Facilities update**

On March 31, about 600 Information Technology employees from the Riverside Office Complex (ROC) in Jacksonville will move into Deerwood Campus Complex's (DCC) Building 600, one of two newly constructed buildings on the campus. Another 400 employees will relocate to DCC in April.

The two new buildings were completed in January and February. About 600 employees from Central GBU Operations moved into Building 400 last month.

Meanwhile, a project team continues to review design options for renovation of the ROC facility. The renovation will provide employees with a comfortable, up-to-date work environment to better serve our 2.5 million members. An architect has been selected to assist the team in better defining options and associated costs. Planning and budgeting will continue through June, and final design should be completed by late July.

**New retirement option offered**

BCBSF is offering a new retirement option to active employees hired or re-hired before Oct. 1, 1999. They will have a one-time opportunity to choose between the existing Traditional Retirement Plan and 401(k) and the new Pension Equity Plan and enhanced 401(k). The choice must be made by June 1, 2000.

Eligible employees recently received a general informational brochure and soon will receive a retirement planning kit that includes a customized worksheet, video and brochure. The worksheet compares estimated retirement benefits under both options. Employees also will be provided phone and Web modeling tools to estimate their benefits using different assumptions. Statewide educational sessions begin in April. Check the kit for meeting details.

Employees hired or rehired on or after Oct. 1, 1999, are eligible to participate in the new retirement option only. Educational sessions will be held for them in August.

**DCC cafeteria scores an 'A'**

In his weekly "Food for Thought" broadcast March 2, 12 on Your Side's Ken Amaro, the consumer reporter for Jacksonville's WTLV-TV, said BCBSF's Deerwood Corporate Campus restaurant scored best on recent state food inspections out of the 40 restaurants he surveyed. Scoring is based on a system developed by inspectors in Pasco County.

"BCBSF scored a 99 and that is clearly an A," Amaro said.



**Customer Satisfaction**



**Market Leadership**



**Financial Strength**



**Public Understanding**



**Org. Effectiveness**



**Delivery Systems**



**National Association**

**A.M. Best affirms 'A' rating for BCBSF and subsidiaries**

A.M. Best, an independent rating agency, has affirmed its "A" (Excellent) rating for BCBSF, as well as for two of our subsidiaries, Health Options and Florida Combined Life.

Best reports that the rating reflects the company's strong market presence, established managed-care capabilities, consistent revenue growth and adequate capital level as well as enrollment growth through new business and the acquisition of Principal Healthcare of Florida. Membership now exceeds 2.5 million, and BCBSF's market share is 24 percent of the state's insured population.

The rating agency also reported that Health Options has the largest HMO network in the state and carries a strong net worth position. A.M. Best expects profit margins will return to previous high levels in the next two to three years.



**BlueCross BlueShield of Florida**

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## Florida recognizes PIA program

Florida Department of Education Commissioner Tom Gallagher recognized BCBSF for its Partners in Achievement (PIA) program March 23 with the Commissioner's Business Recognition Award. The award goes to a company in each school district that has made generous contributions of time, talent and financial resources to one or more schools in the district.

The Baker County School District nominated BCBSF for "best practices" in school-to-work programs. Participating PIA students work at BCBSF or at the high school in a facility that simulates the BCBSF office environment. The students receive summer training as data entry examiners and can earn a Certificate in Customer Service through weekly on-site instruction provided by the Florida Community College at Jacksonville. Currently, 27 Baker High School students participate in the program.

In addition to Baker, about 20 Jacksonville area high schools participate in PIA.

## Help Desk gets new phone number

Starting April 1, the Help Desk's new phone number is ext. 58737. For the branch offices, this five-digit extension will replace the 1-800 number used to dial the Help Desk outside of Jacksonville. A special Help Desk promo will be distributed soon with a handy reference to the menu options recorded on the Help Desk phone line.

## Self-serve Help Desk debuts

Employees with COE 4.0 on their PCs can now avoid lengthy waits and get faster service from the Help Desk by logging and tracking their own Help Desk tickets. Look for the "Service Center" icon on your desktop. That is the tool that will enable you to immediately key your problem or service need into the Help Desk queue, bypassing those waiting on the phone for assistance with computer or telephone requests. You can check the status of your ticket at the push of a few buttons.

Go to the Customer Service page of the Information Technology (IT) Intranet site for instructions on how to create your own Help Desk ticket. Or watch for a "Service Center—Problem Management" brown bag session coming soon.

***The great thing in this world is not  
so much where we stand as in what  
direction we are moving.***

**—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.**

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