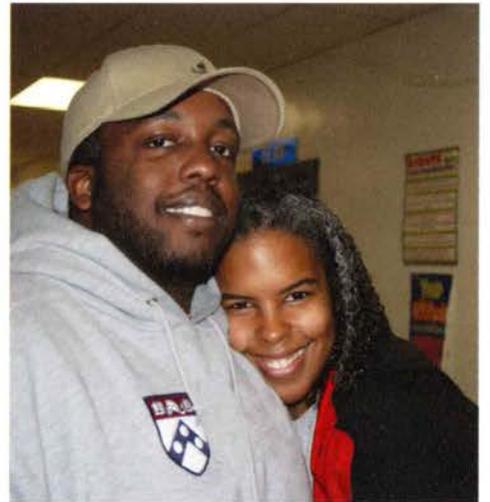




**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Chair in Health Disparities  
and the Robert I. Lufano, M.D. Health Disparities Support Fund  
at the University of Florida**

November 14, 2011





## Executive Summary

The University of Florida and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida will partner to improve the health and well-being of all Floridians and to prepare future leaders who are equipped to lead the effort to eliminate health disparities. To honor Dr. Robert Lufrano's efforts to advance this work and in appreciation for his service to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation will endow a faculty position to be known as the **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Chair in Health Disparities** with a generous gift of \$1.5 million. In addition, the Foundation will establish the **Robert I. Lufrano, M.D. Health Disparities Support Fund** with a \$100,000 endowment to be used for student scholarship assistance and other activities in support of the chair. These investments will provide critical recurring funding for interdisciplinary faculty research, education and public outreach programs with a primary goal of reducing health disparities.

## Health Disparities Research

The health disparities effort at the University of Florida focuses on the successful translation of basic, clinical and social-



behavioral research into health promotion and prevention efforts to eliminate lifestyle-related health disparities. Using a culturally sensitive, health empowerment approach, faculty will endeavor to reduce health disparities in Florida by such activities as promoting healthy lifestyles (e.g.,

healthy eating, physical activity and stress management) and reducing health risk behaviors (e.g., smoking and treatment non-adherence) across the lifespan, particularly among members of racial/ethnic minority, low-income, medically underserved and rural/urban communities (referred to as at-risk communities) in Florida.

## Faculty Endowments

Named, endowed faculty positions are an imprimatur of faculty excellence, honoring the named donor and the faculty member who receives the benefit. Named chairs and professorships signal a donor's serious commitment to the work of the faculty member while recognizing that individual's leadership. Faculty endowments guarantee that faculty members have a consistent source of funding for their academic endeavors. Endowed positions often allow the university to recruit or retain the best candidate, and the impact of endowments is a lasting one. Research and outreach powered by an endowment can address issues we're facing today and avoid challenges future generations could face tomorrow.

Continued success in the area of health disparities research requires a key faculty leader.

*The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Chair in Health Disparities* will have the opportunity to guide the University of Florida's cross-disciplinary work in health disparities, including work to transition the UF Health Disparities Research and Intervention Program to the status of a center. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Chair in Health Disparities will be the face of health disparities research at the university and will be expected and encouraged to be the primary contact with key state and national legislators, federal funding agencies and state

and national media on the subject, thus providing leadership not only to the University of Florida, but to the state and national community as well.

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Chair will lead the state in initiatives to (a) implement culturally sensitive practices in health care and health promotion, (b) train future health providers to follow these best practices and increase diversity among future providers and researchers, (c) promote community-partnered health research to reduce health disparities, and (d) empower underserved individuals to adopt health-promoting



lifestyles. When the chair is tapped for leadership positions, and speaks to a national audience, she (or he) will be readily identified as the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Chair in Health Disparities. Only individuals with the senior rank of associate or full professor may be named as the chair.

In addition to a key leader, student support funding is critical.

#### **The Robert I. Lufano, M.D. Health Disparities Support Fund**

will provide ancillary support to the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Chair in Health Disparities and may contribute to the work of a post-doctoral student, graduate or undergraduate students.

### **The University of Florida**

The University of Florida is a public, land-grant, research university. It is one of the most comprehensive public universities in the United States, encompassing most academic and professional disciplines. It is also the oldest and largest of Florida's 11 universities, is Florida's only member of the prestigious Association of American Universities (which consists of the top 61 public and private institutions in North America), and is one of the nation's largest universities, enrolling approximately 52,000 students per year. Its faculty and staff are dedicated to the common pursuit of the university's threefold mission: education, research and service.

The University of Florida is committed to recruiting a student body that reflects the cultural diversity of Florida's citizens and to providing excellent educational opportunities to all students who are academically qualified. The notion of service is embedded in the original intent of this land-grant university and remains central to the very mission of the University of Florida, which is "providing an unparalleled experience where the very best

individuals create and share knowledge to serve the people of Florida and the world." UF addresses a broad range of concerns that emerge in Florida and exist far beyond the state's borders.

### **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) is a leader in Florida's health industry. Since 1944, the company has been dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of all those it serves and is committed to helping people and communities achieve better health. BCBSF is a not-for-profit, policyholder-owned, tax-paying mutual company. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., BCBSF is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies.

### **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation**

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation (BCBSF Foundation) is a separate, philanthropic affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida incorporated in the state of Florida. Its mission is to improve the health and well-being of Floridians and their communities. The BCBSF Foundation and its parent, BCBSF, are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies.

### **Conclusion**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida's long history of serving Floridians, through its commitment to excellence in health care and health promotion and its strong support for local communities, makes it an ideal partner for the work in health disparities research at the University of Florida. Such a partnership with the University of Florida will create future leadership prepared to reduce health disparities and reduce health care costs for the state and will result in a model for culturally sensitive health promotion at the national level. By supporting health disparities research, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida and its Foundation will truly make a positive difference in the lives of all Floridians.





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