

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida
Statement on Coalition for Tobacco Responsibility
April 29, 1998

“Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) today joined the Coalition for Tobacco Responsibility, an alliance of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in about 35 states, in commencing litigation against the tobacco industry. We are taking this action on behalf of our stakeholders in light of emerging evidence concerning the tobacco industry.

“Our complaint alleges, among other things, that the tobacco industry misrepresented the addictive nature of nicotine, manipulated the levels of nicotine in its products and committed other deceptive actions.

“Protecting our customers’ health is of paramount importance to BCBSF. Additionally, tobacco products exact a heavy price by increasing health care costs for all Floridians whether they smoke or not. The tobacco companies should be held responsible for offsetting that cost.

“BCBSF commends the state of Florida, the Minnesota Blue Cross and Blue Shield plan and those other states which have been at the forefront of the fight against the tobacco industry. Their initiative and leadership has helped to expose the conduct and activities of tobacco companies that have substantially added to health care costs.”

*Attribute to: Bruce N. Bagni, Senior Vice President and General Counsel
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida*