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Florida Blue Named Employer of the Year for Disability Inclusion

Leading Florida Health Insurer Scores Perfect 100 on Disability Equality Index

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – For numerous initiatives enabling people with disabilities to join its workforce and easily access information, Florida Blue, the leading health insurer in Florida, was named 2017 Employer of the Year for businesses with fewer than 100,000 employees by the U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN), a national non-profit that helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain and marketplace. Florida Blue also earned a perfect score of 100 on the Disability Equality Index (DEI) survey, a joint initiative of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and USBLN to track trends in business inclusion policies.

“We firmly believe that a diverse, inclusive workforce increases our understanding of each other and our customers,” said Florida Blue CEO Pat Geraghty. “It strengthens our ability to learn from one another and ultimately enables us to deliver on our mission to help people and communities achieve better health. This recognition of our commitment to be inclusive of people with disabilities is very meaningful to us at Florida Blue.”

Some of the company’s achievements and initiatives in the past year include:

- Tripled the number of people with disabilities hired year-over-year in 2016 due to robust accessibility efforts and community outreach;
- Focused on accommodations to assist people with disabilities that led to a 134 percent increase in accommodations made in 2016 over the previous year;
- Partnered with the City of Jacksonville to lead the annual Disability and HireAbilities Symposium and Job Fair attended by 160 employers and hundreds of job candidates;
- Supported the launch of www.employemefirst.org, a website partnership among the City of Jacksonville, The ARC Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities;

- Piloted a program with The ARC Jacksonville to hire individuals with intellectual disabilities as part of an effort to create more inclusive and meaningful employment opportunities in the corporate world;
- Launched a pre-orientation for new hires with disabilities to meet their needs immediately as they start their careers at Florida Blue; and
- Developed and implemented a unique training program for customer service advocates to respond to the needs of people with disabilities, and designated resources to handle complex cases.

Florida Blue is a leader in two areas that many companies have not addressed: According to USBLN, only 39 percent of companies in the DEI survey communicate the option to request accommodations for those with disabilities during job interviews, and just over half audit their external websites for accessibility by customers with disabilities.

“Accommodations are an important aspect of our work environment,” said Florida Blue’s Chief Human Resource Officer Amy Ruth. “When recruiting for open positions, all candidates are assessed equally based on capability. Once selected for an interview, our recruiters are trained to inquire if a candidate requires any accommodations for their visit to our location. If so, we have dedicated specialists work to coordinate the visits.” Additionally, in the past year, Florida Blue also launched the Meaningful Access Project to design its website and all customer-facing digital platforms to meet accessibility guidelines.

The DEI survey, completed by 110 companies nationally, offers businesses an assessment of their disability inclusion policies and practices. Florida Blue was among a record 68 companies to receive a perfect score, a signal that becoming inclusive of people with disabilities drives positive business results.

About Florida Blue

Florida Blue is a leader in Florida’s health care industry. Its mission is to help people and communities achieve better health. Florida Blue serves more than 5 million health care members, and nearly 18 million people in 12 states are served through its affiliated companies. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., it is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies. For more information, visit www.FloridaBlue.com.