



Foundation

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Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation Launches Groundbreaking Effort with Long-time Partner Open Table to Address Substance Use Disorder Among Young People

Woodstock, VA –As part of its parent company’s three-year, \$30 million commitment to programs supporting mental health and well-being, the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation unveiled an initiative in Shenandoah County, Virginia, to address the substance use disorder crisis among children and adolescents. Through a \$750,000 grant awarded to its long-standing non-profit partner, The Open Table, Inc., Anthem has funded an initiative focused on “Strengthening Shenandoah” – an effort supporting the Shenandoah Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, Shenandoah County Public Schools, Life Enrichment Services, and Strength in Peers.

“Young people are the foundation of our future and when substance use disorder threatens to disrupt their lives, society suffers,” said Monica Schmude, President Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Virginia. “Anthem is committed to supporting the whole health of individuals and families, focusing on removing barriers that impede growth and wellness and collaborating with community partners to provide a path for healing and treatment.”

As part of this comprehensive approach to address substance use disorder and mental health challenges among Shenandoah children and adolescents, the initiative integrates crucial services to provide individualized support for students and their families. The key components include:

1. **Substance Use and Mental Health Assessments:** All youth and families referred to the program by Student Support Specialists or the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court will undergo a comprehensive evaluation of substance use and mental health.
2. **Recovery Coaching:** Families and youth recommended for SUD treatment will receive support through recovery coaching. This service offers personalized guidance to help participants navigate recovery, strengthen resilience, and develop long-term strategies for overcoming substance use.
3. **Make a Change Program:** Students who test positive for substances will be enrolled in the school based “Make a Change” program. This program will implement the evidence-based CATCH (Comprehensive Approach to Child Health) Curriculum, which promotes healthier behaviors and decision-making related to substance use. Over three years, the CATCH curriculum will be integrated into school assemblies, reaching all 5,961 students within Shenandoah County Public Schools.
4. **Community Support & Recovery:** Interventions include implementing multiple Open Table social support network models already proven through multiple Anthem initiatives in

Virginia. Trained community volunteers implement Open Table models to reduce social determinants of health barriers (transportation, access to health care, treatment services, social isolation, etc.). After the year of formal peer recovery support services, a “discharge” plan will be implemented to create long-term sustainable support through the practice of Open Table models within the community.

5. **Program Evaluation:** The initiative’s outcomes will be continually evaluated to ensure it meets its goals and drives impactful change. Data will be collected from multiple sources, including participant feedback, performance metrics, and community impact reports. This ongoing evaluation process will allow flexibility and responsiveness to evolving community needs. Ultimately, the results will inform the development of best practices for future implementation and long-term success.

“I am excited to see the great work that Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield and Open Table are doing to tackle substance use disorder across the Commonwealth of Virginia,” said Senator Timmy French. “This partnership will allow children, adolescents, and families of Shenandoah County to take the next steps toward better outcomes and a stronger community.”

“As a former prosecutor, I have seen firsthand the devastating effects of substance use disorder on families,” said Delegate Todd Gilbert, Republican Leader of the Virginia House of Delegates. “The partnership of organizations like Anthem and Open Table sheds some light on the issues and provides the necessary support for positive change.”

The Honorable Chad Logan, presiding judge of Shenandoah Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court said, “Shenandoah extends heartfelt gratitude to Anthem for empowering our social systems and residents to help students and families affected by the substance use disorder crisis. By integrating community-based models, we strengthen and innovate our policies, creating a broader vision for improving the health and future of our residents. Today, in Shenandoah, we are taking vital steps forward, starting with our children and adolescents, to bring healing and lasting change to our community.”

The Open Table evidence-driven models that will be implemented in the Shenandoah initiative have demonstrated success over a five-year partnership with Anthem in Virginia. These models effectively support diverse populations facing complex social determinants of health challenges, including those in recovery, through individualized community-driven solutions.

Jon Katov, Founder and CEO of The Open Table said, “Over the past five years as a partner with Anthem, we have deeply experienced the heart of the organization and the vision and commitment of its thousands of associates for whole health in Virginia. This vision swings open the doors for individuals to overcome barriers and realize their highest human potential. We are profoundly grateful for the Anthem Foundation’s investment in this collaborative effort and their steadfast belief in the transformative work of Open Table.”

About Anthem Blue Cross Foundation

The Anthem Blue Cross Foundation, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Association, is a philanthropic arm of the Elevance Health Foundation. The Foundation works to address health equity by focusing on improving the health of the socially vulnerable through strategic partnerships and programs in our communities with an emphasis on maternal child health; mental health; and food as medicine. Additionally, the Foundation also responds to disasters when our communities need us the most. The Foundation coordinates the company’s year-round Dollars for Dollars program which provides a 100 percent match of associates’ donations, as well as its Volunteer Time Off and Dollars for Doers community service programs. ®ANTHEM is a registered trademark of

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About Open Table

Open Table is a 501 (c)(3), non-profit organization founded in 2005. Open Table develops models that train communities to form meaningful outcome partnerships with nonprofit and for-profit organizations serving people with complex needs. By creating open access to a community's social capital, these shared-purpose partnerships successfully empower individuals and families to have the lives they envision for themselves and their children. Trained in 34 states, Open Table unites communities and organizations in data-driven, outcome-producing relationships focused on removing barriers to improve social drivers of health (SDOH). Through Open Table models, communities are partnering with business, education, faith-based, government, healthcare, human services, and other sectors to equip people to reach their highest potential.



Pictured: (l to r) Senator Timmy French, Superintendent Dr. Melody Sheppard, Alicia Aston from Shenandoah County Public Schools, Honorable Judge Chad Logan, Jon Katov, Monica Schmude, President of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia, and Delegate Todd Gilbert.