



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO



BlueCross BlueShield
of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2014

Contact:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

Mike Deering, BCBSIL

312.653.1266

michael.deering@bcbsil.com

**MAYOR EMANUEL, BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF ILLINOIS ANNOUNCE
PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT DIVVY BIKE SHARE SYSTEM**

Five-Year, \$12.5 million Agreement to Become the Exclusive System Sponsor

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today that Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) has committed to a \$12.5 million, five-year sponsorship investment to support, strengthen and expand the popular Divvy bike share program.

“Our partnership with Blue Cross helps us to expand the bike share system, improve and maintain bike lanes and encourage cycling in all neighborhoods across Chicago,” Mayor Emanuel said. “This investment from Blue Cross will help us continue to encourage Chicagoans to get around this great city in more active ways.”

As part of BCBSIL’s exclusive system sponsorship agreement, Divvy bikes and vans across the city will soon sport an updated design with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois logos showcasing the partnership. The City and Divvy will also partner with BCBSIL to promote active transportation choices, like bike sharing, and how these activities can lead to improved health and wellness.

“Rarely do you have an opportunity to improve public health, protect our environment and boost productivity for individuals and businesses in a single, effective way,” said Karen Atwood, President of BCBSIL. “As the state’s largest health insurer, we are committed to fostering healthy, active lifestyles, and our support of the Divvy program is directly in keeping with that philosophy.”

The City plans to leverage the additional \$2.5 million in annual funds from BCBSIL to not only expand the Divvy system, but also help provide a number of things that will benefit cycling in neighborhoods across Chicago, including:

- Securing additional bike lane sweeping and snow removal equipment
- Funding more bike lane materials like bollards, signage and striping
- Employing more bike ambassadors to educate Chicagoans about bike safety
- Developing and printing new bike route maps

Recent government and private studies show that biking just two to three miles per day can provide substantial health benefits, and cities with such bike sharing programs are shown to have lowered their obesity rates. <http://www.governing.com/news/state/gov-biking-walking-cities-obesity-study.html>

In Chicago, the Divvy program has become extraordinarily popular for both commuters and recreational riders alike. Since Divvy launched in late June 2013, bicyclists have taken more than one million trips, riding more than 2.25 million miles, and collectively burning an estimated 100 million calories.

In addition to the \$2.5 million annual financial support it is providing, Blue Cross will promote the Divvy program to its Chicago area employees, who will receive a \$30 corporate annual membership rate as a way to encourage participation. The City is also working with BCBSIL to develop a discount program for annual membership for all of its insurance customers later this year.

About Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL)

With 7.7 million members, BCBSIL, a division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company, is the largest health insurance company in Illinois. Begun in 1936 in Chicago, BCBSIL remains member owned rather than publicly traded, and is committed to promoting the health and wellness of its members and its communities, fostering greater access to care, and working to lower the overall cost of care while improving the health care quality and patient outcomes.

About Divvy

Divvy is Chicago's newest transit system, giving Chicago residents and visitors a bike on-demand at hundreds of stations across the city. Intended to provide an additional transportation option for getting around, Divvy is convenient, fast, fun, and affordable. For more information and a map of station locations, visit DivvyBikes.com

###