



480 Hercules Drive, Colchester, VT 05446 • 802/655-1910 • Fax 802/655-1932 • www.VermontQuality.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Alison Johnson, 802/655-1910

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont wins Governor's Award for Performance Excellence

Colchester, VT—Vermont Council for Quality announced today that Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont in Berlin will receive the 2007 Governor's Award for Performance Excellence. Governor Douglas will honor Blue Cross Blue Shield at the Vermont Council for Quality's Annual Recognition and Award Ceremony on May 14, 2008 at the Sunset Ballroom in South Burlington, Vermont.

The Governor's Award for Performance Excellence recognizes organizations in Vermont that successfully achieve performance excellence within their management systems and operations. Award recipients are evaluated by an independent board of Vermont Performance Excellence Examiners in seven areas: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results. The evaluation process includes approximately 1,000 hours of review and an on-site visit by a team of volunteer examiners to clarify questions and verify information in an organizational self-assessment application.

“The Governor’s Award for Performance Excellence is the highest level of recognition by an organization for outstanding performance, achievement, and results in Vermont. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont has achieved role model status by continuously improving their processes and systems through the use the Performance Excellence Criteria. The Vermont Program for Performance is pleased to recognize their commitment and dedication to performance excellence,” states Laurie Emerson, President of Vermont Council for Quality.

“We are committed to serving our Vermont customers and members with the highest quality health coverage in the industry,” said William R. Milnes, Jr., BCBSVT’s President and Chief Executive Officer.

“To that end, we have adopted a culture of continuous quality improvement, using the tools of performance excellence to track, measure and constantly improve all of our functions and processes. We appreciate the high honor of the Governor’s Award because it recognizes the work of our employees and affirms the processes that we have put in place to serve our customers by building an industry-leading health plan on a small scale here in Vermont.”

Founded in 1944 as part of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Hampshire and Vermont, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont split from the New Hampshire Plan in the early 1980s and began building its own infrastructure. Quickly growing from a company with about fifty employees, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont now employs over 300 dedicated Vermonters and is the health care financing mechanism of choice for the majority of Vermont citizens. Blue Cross Blue Shield is the state's only Vermont-based health coverage carrier.

Vermont Council for Quality was founded in 1996 as a non-profit that helps Vermont organizations improve performance and competitiveness. VCQ's products and services include a comprehensive organizational self-assessment that identifies strengths and improvement opportunities and serves as the foundation for the Vermont Council for Quality Award process. In addition, VCQ provides continuous improvement education and training, networking opportunities that share best practices within and between Vermont organizations, and special events and conferences with national award winning speakers.

For more information, please visit our website at www.VermontQuality.org.

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