

# Message from Dr. Cara Christ, Chief Medical Officer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona

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## Inspiring health together

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### Message from Dr. Cara Christ, Chief Medical Officer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona

I have long admired and appreciated how health insurance providers and public health teams have worked together to address immediate healthcare needs of the community and directly help people thrive. Throughout my career, I've seen an incredible willingness to step up and collaborate to make a difference in the lives of Arizonans.

As Chief Medical Officer for Blue Cross<sup>®</sup> Blue Shield<sup>®</sup> of Arizona (BCBSAZ), I remain passionate about nurturing the wellness of our Arizona community. I resonate with BCBSAZ's ongoing commitment to moving the needle on tough population issues such as substance use disorder, mental health, chronic health conditions, and health equity.

### Whole-person health is key

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In this new role, I've prioritized addressing "whole-person health." During the last five years, while many Arizonans have reported feeling physically healthier, mental distress has increased. To help address this, we are actively working to implement an integrated medical management strategy that blends physical health, behavioral health, and the vital social determinants of health. The goal is to create a best-in-class model that continues improving health across Arizona.

### Priority #1: Diabetes

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One of the first key health conditions we're addressing is diabetes. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, one in 10 Arizona adults has diabetes. BCBSAZ is teaming up with the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and other community partners to spearhead a **Diabetes Action Plan** focused on regulating blood sugar levels by:

- Engaging those living with diabetes and prediabetes in active management strategies
- Increasing provider accessibility for diabetes care
- Enhancing care management for diabetes
- Reducing the disparity of outcomes across the population
- Performing routine surveillance to monitor diabetes

Our goal is a 25% reduction in the progression of diabetes by 2025. Not only will we be helping BCBSAZ members living with diabetes and prediabetes, but we also aim to improve public health in our communities statewide.

### **Invitation to collaborate**

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Having led the state's public health system allows me to bring a different perspective to BCBSAZ's clinical team, as well as to peers in the industry. My goal is to introduce and implement creative, collaborative solutions that positively impact the health of Arizonans. I invite you to join me in encouraging wellness and ensuring access to affordable, convenient, and personalized healthcare. I look forward to working with many of you on the Diabetes Action Plan, as well as other population health priorities in the future.

*Prior to accepting her role as Chief Medical Officer at BCBSAZ, Dr. Christ served as ADHS Director, leading the state's COVID-19 response during the largest public health initiative in the nation's history.*

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