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News Release

For Immediate Release

Blue Cross Blue Shield Board Names Paul von Ebers as President and CEO

Extensive industry experience combined with Midwestern values led to him as unanimous choice to lead state's largest health insurer

The Board of Directors of Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND) announced that insurance industry veteran Paul von Ebers has been chosen as the next CEO and president of the member-owned health insurer, stating that he has demonstrated a proven track record of leadership in health care insurance and a commitment to members and employees.

“We identified strict qualifications for the next leader of our member-owned company,” said Dennis Elbert, BCBSND Board chairman. “We’re happy to say that von Ebers exceeds these qualifications and we are confident he brings the right mix of proven leadership, experience and acumen to the role. We’re unanimous in our choice.”

Deeply rooted in the Midwest, von Ebers holds an MBA in finance and hospital administration from the Graduate School of Business, University of Chicago. He’s done extensive work with entities of the Blue Cross Blue Shield organization both in senior management positions and as a private consultant. From 2005 to 2009, von Ebers helped run Excellus Health Blue Cross Blue Shield and Univera health plans, first as senior vice president of Marketing and then as executive vice president and chief operating officer. Prior to that, von Ebers owned a health care strategic planning and consulting business and held executive positions with Blue Cross and Blue Shield organizations in Iowa and Illinois. He has a reputation for building effective teams and creating collaborative relationships with employees, members and insurance regulators.

“Health care costs are on the top of every North Dakotan’s mind. In this role I’m committed to working side-by-side with health care providers and regulators to control costs without sacrificing the high quality care North Dakotans receive today,” said von Ebers. “Based on the impressive team that’s already in place at BCBSND, I’m confident we can make that happen.”

Von Ebers rose to the top in a nationwide search for likely candidates conducted by PACE Group, a Chicago-based executive search firm hired by the BCBSND Board to facilitate the process, with help from a search committee. To reach to the finalist stage in the search, candidates needed to meet qualifications established by the BCBSND Board, including a minimum of 10 years experience in the health care industry, experience in consensus building, operational experience including budgeting and finance, and a track record of successfully developing and implementing strategic plans. Additional emphasis was placed on candidates who have lived or worked in the upper Midwest and possessed a strong business and personal code of conduct. Approximately

43 potential candidates applied or were identified by PACE. From that initial pool, PACE interviewed 15, and then narrowed the list to four finalists. In June the four were interviewed by the BCBSND Board at BCBSND headquarters.

“For the future of the company, we wanted a respected veteran of the industry with a reputation for good judgment and great insight,” Elbert said. “Blue Cross is a strong North Dakota company. We needed to identify an equally strong leader who could ensure this company serves the best interests of our members, especially as health care continues to change both regionally and nationally.”

The naming of a new President and CEO was a BCBSND Board priority identified in a recently ratified seven-point strategic plan. It was also part of an aggressive agenda of self-examination and oversight focusing on change for the future.

“Because we were unanimous in our decision to name Paul von Ebers as CEO, we wanted to let the members know immediately,” said Elbert. “We didn’t want any delay in moving our company forward with a new focus.”

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, a not-for-profit mutual company owned by its members, serves more than 53 percent of the state’s population, providing health coverage and related benefits to more than 449,000 members. BCBSND is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

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