

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
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Google Fiber for Communities-- Dakota County, MN Letter of Support

Dear Sir,

As a non profit organization and one of the largest employers in Dakota County, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross) is headquartered within the City of Eagan, Minnesota.

Blue Cross is a major driver of change in Minnesota's health care environment and is heavily engaged in developing a more modern and efficient health care system. We are working with our health care providers to design and implement this system, including Fairview Health Care System and Mayo Clinic, two of Minnesota's leading health care systems. These partnerships are in place, strong and ongoing. Minnesota has a well-deserved reputation for high quality, low cost health care and we have been a long-standing member of this innovative community.

New and improving technologies are enabling health care change to occur. A fiber optic network connecting to all homes in Dakota County would accelerate these changes. Blue Cross is focusing on three innovations that will change the way in which we maintain the health of our community. Each revolves around the concept of bringing care to people's lives where they live or work. Technology can make this happen.

Prevention and care of chronic disease –

By providing consumer education and through online monitoring, Blue Cross proposes to reduce the number of people with preventable chronic diseases. Already Blue Cross employees, in a trial project, are using telephone, texting and web cams to communicate with their doctors and health care professionals. A FTTH network would enable these communication tools to be upgraded to include downloadable videos and two-way hi-definition video communications.

Training and support of community health workers –

Minnesota has growing numbers of new Americans from all over the world, including Hmong and other Asian groups, Hispanics, East Africans and Eastern Europeans. Blue Cross is an advocate for the use of community health workers. Currently, training to become a community health worker is now available only at selected state colleges. Using distance education tools, prospective workers would be able to connect to training curriculum in a more flexible way. A FTTH network would allow them to meet with health professionals no matter where they were located in the state or in the world. More flexibility in the educational offerings would allow people from our diverse communities to become certified to work within their own communities, thus decreasing language and cultural barriers and increasing effectiveness.

Personal Health Records-

Consumers can better understand their own health situation with access to a secure online personal health record. They could more effectively advocate for their own health interests through better understanding of treatment options and they could also share this information with

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other health care providers and their own families. Through a secure FTTH network, the potential of personal health records can be realized.

And, finally as with most major employers, Blue Cross would be able to take advantage of a Google FTTH network to allow more teleworkers (currently only 10% of our employee population) to work from home on a regular or occasional basis, during normal operations or during a pandemic. Additionally, Blue Cross would be able to offer their employees skill training that would allow their staff to become more efficient and effective in their existing positions and for them to move up the career ladder.

We invite Google to join us here in Dakota County as a fellow traveler and to share in our success.

Sincerely,



MaryAnn Stump
SVP and Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota