When one of his patients was diagnosed with diabetes, Dr. Will Kaufman, director of community health and wellness at First Choice Community Healthcare, recommended that the patient substantially change her diet toward plant-based nutrition. While Dr. Kaufman said he can “plant the seed for that idea in a 15-minute clinical encounter,” the healthy cooking classes offered by First Choice allow patients to experience the change firsthand.

In addition to taking oral medication, the patient “went through a journey of nutrition,” Dr. Kaufman said. She started attending the monthly cooking classes, and in the first three months of treatment, her A1C level — or measure of average blood sugar — improved, dropping from 13 to below seven. This patient is one of many who have benefited from the)

COOKING FOR HEALTH
An innovative First Choice Community Healthcare program, sponsored by BCBSNM, is helping community members prevent and manage chronic health conditions.
program, which is funded through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico’s (BCBSNM) Healthy Kids, Healthy Families® grant program.

“I’ve seen a dramatic change in their health trajectory,” Dr. Kaufman said of his patients who attend the classes. “I see their health improving.”
Since 2014, BCBSNM has funded programming at the nonprofit, community-based health center system in New Mexico to support diabetes prevention and management and nutrition education. In 2017, BCBSNM awarded a $25,000 grant to First Choice’s South Valley Commons Wellness Initiatives, which offer monthly cooking classes and fresh, locally grown organic produce that many participants wouldn’t normally be able to obtain. It’s all to help individuals and families learn how to better manage or prevent chronic health conditions. Class participants are community members and patients referred to the program by First Choice or other medical providers.

The bilingual English-Spanish classes, which are held at First Choice’s South Valley Health Commons in Albuquerque, begin with a talk on nutrition led by a medical provider. Chefs, caterers and others demonstrate recipes while samples of each prepared food are distributed, offering participants a full-sensory taste of nutrition.

"I’ve learned so much about health and nutrition."

Participant Silvia Vasquez explained that she is learning how nutrition can help with the prevention of diabetes and cancer, which run in her family. Mark Blasetti, another participant, said that he’s eating more fresh vegetables and fruit, and he’s learning how to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and other conditions. “I’ve learned so much about health and nutrition,” Blasetti said.
The BCBSNM grant helps fund each class and subsidizes the cost of the fruits and vegetables each participant takes home. In addition, 40 low-income families from First Choice clinics receive weekly baskets of produce during a 20-week harvest period. To provide the produce, First Choice partners with Agri-Cultura Network — a group of farms in Albuquerque’s South Valley — and La Cosecha CSA, a community-supported agriculture program.

The program draws an average of 30 to 40 people to each class every month, although it’s not uncommon to see turnout double. “We’ve had three classes this year with between 80 and 100 people,” Dr. Kaufman said. “It’s very exciting to me that people keep coming back to our classes, and I can see them making changes. Without Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico, we wouldn’t have these classes, and we’re incredibly grateful.”

To see the program in action, watch our video.
MAKING WELLNESS E…
Engaging employees to take good care of their health

LET YOUR GARDEN GROW
The Community Pantry’s gardening efforts are helping pr…

HELPING IN ALL SEASONS OF…
Offering a service you might not expect from an insurance company

View Social Responsibility Reports for Health Care Service Corporation
For Language Assistance – Non-discrimination Notice
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico’s (BCBSNM) Care Van® program can now deliver mobile health care to more New Mexicans than ever before. At the end of 2017, a second Care Van joined the operation — doubling BCBSNM’s efforts to bring services and health screenings to children and adults across the state in 2018 and beyond.

A main goal of the expansion is to broaden access to care. “The Care Van has the unique ability to reach people in communities where they don’t have easy access to health screenings,” said Cynthia Baldonado, BCBSNM senior manager of community relations. “We’ve seen great success with this program, and we’re dedicated to helping address the needs of our state.”
Since launching in 2006, the Care Van has operated as a mobile clinic to provide medical screenings and preventive care to underserved communities throughout New Mexico. While many factors — such as finances, insurance coverage and transportation — can prevent residents from receiving critical medical services, the Care Van assists in bridging this gap by taking services to where people live and work.

When community members see the Care Van for the first time, they often tell BCBSNM’s Care Van Program Specialist Thomas Butler that they don’t have insurance or they’re not BCBSNM members. “The services of the Care Van are open to everyone,” Butler responds. “What’s the catch?” he commonly hears. “There’s no catch,” Butler says. “It really surprises people.”

Over the years, the Care Van has traversed New Mexico to serve cities, towns, villages and tribal communities in nearly every county of the state: locations such as Farmington, San Felipe Pueblo, Gallup and Roswell, to name a few.

The Care Van also regularly visits BCBSNM-funded food distributions at senior centers and schools as part of Roadrunner Food Bank’s* Childhood Hunger Initiative and Senior Hunger Initiative. With two mobile units, BCBSNM will increase the Care Van’s presence in localities and tribal areas across New Mexico.

In 2017, the Care Van served 10,320 people and provided more than 4,000 medical services and screenings — numbers that will continue to grow as the new Care Van hits the road.
The Care Van has the unique ability to reach people in communities where they don’t have easy access to health screenings.

BCBSNM teams up with community partners such as DaVita Medical Group, Lovelace Health System, the New Mexico Department of Health and the University of New Mexico to provide health services. Licensed medical professionals administer general checkups, immunizations, rapid HIV testing**, dental screenings and other types of exams and evaluations.

The Care Vans feature satellite service, allowing instantaneous record updates to the New Mexico Statewide Immunization Information System***. Providers can give the screening results directly to the patient, who can then share them with their primary care provider. Not only can such preventive care encourage individuals and families to stay healthy, but it may also catch potential health concerns or conditions.

As the Care Van program grows, BCBSNM looks forward to improving outreach and expanding connections throughout New Mexico.
For more information about requesting the Care Van for an event or project, visit bcbsnm.com.

*Roadrunner Food Bank is a 501(c)(3) organization in New Mexico.

**Independent providers are responsible for state requirements.

***Database managed by the New Mexico Department of Health. For more information, please visit nmhealth.org.
COOKING FOR HEALTH
An innovative First Choice Community Healthcare program...

LET YOUR GARDEN GROW
The Community Pantry’s gardening efforts are helping pr...

SHARING THE WELLNESS M...
Providing reliable sources for health and benefits information
The web is full of misinformation about health and wellness.

Having an accurate, timely and reliable source cut through the noise is vital. That's why we empower our members with a variety of digital resources that help them take an active role in their health and get the most out of their health plan.

On Connect, we host a social community featuring blogs, videos and infographics that engage members and prospective members in conversations around health, wellness and coverage. Registered Connect users can follow their favorite topics, like posts, add comments and ask questions.

Connect also provides culturally relevant content in Spanish for our Latino communities, as well as articles and resources on topics that are important to our Medicare members.
In 2017, Connect increased its reach, sharing community updates, health and wellness information, health insurance coverage guidance and more with over one million views.

Visit Connect, and join the conversation. Connect en Español.

"The site is easy to navigate and it's easy to find what I need - very helpful, especially with my busy schedule."
Our award-winning LifeTimes newsletter is emailed to more than 2 million members each month. The articles, videos and interactive tools help members improve their health and learn how to use their benefits to get the most for their health care dollars.

Anyone can find current and past articles on the LifeTimes website. Visit LifeTimes online.

LifeTimes in Spanish.

IS THERE A SECRET RECIPE FOR A GOOD NIGHT’S SLEEP?

Learn More
LET YOUR GARDEN GROW
The Community Pantry’s gardening efforts are helping pr…

HELPING IN ALL SEASONS OF...
Offering a service you might not expect from an insurance company

COOKING FOR HEALTH
An innovative First Choice Community Healthcare program…

For media inquiries, contact Becky Kenny, Manager of Public Relations for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico at 505-816-2012 or Becky_Kenny@bcbsnm.com.

Powered by PROVIDENCE DESIGN. The use of site is governed by these TERMS OF SERVICE and PRIVACY POLICIES.
Every day, a special group at our company assists families dealing with the loss of a loved one. The Seasons of Life℠ team takes on the burden of medical paperwork during this difficult time, ensuring claims are filed properly, resolving billing issues with providers and other insurance companies, and handling details like transferring other family members to a new policy.

The team is also on point during disasters such as fires and floods to make sure members who suffered losses, or were injured or displaced, have help with medical and insurance needs such as finding medical providers, getting prescriptions filled and obtaining new insurance cards.
In 2017, the Seasons of Life team had more than 6,300 cases and made more than 11,000 outreach phone calls during Hurricane Harvey relief efforts alone.

The Seasons of Life team’s work goes hand in hand with our company’s purpose, to do everything in our power to stand with our members in sickness and in health.

Read more about how the Seasons of Life team helps our members in their time of need.
BRINGING MOBILE HEALTH
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico expands Care Van® program...

COOKING FOR HEALTH
An innovative First Choice Community Healthcare program...

MAKING WELLNESS ENGAGEMENT
Engaging employees to take good care of their health