

Strategic Cost Management

SPARK™ provides physical education to fight childhood obesity in Tennessee

According to the Tennessee Department of Health, 40 percent of the children in that state are overweight or obese. Obesity dramatically increases a person's risk for dangerous health conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer. In an effort to reverse the trend, the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation partnered with SPARK, a Blue Cross and Blue Shield national supplier for physical education programs.

The two partners collaborated to create the "Shape the State" grant program, an initiative to provide 20 middle schools across Tennessee with quality physical education programs. Valued at \$10,000 each, the grants provide the nationally acclaimed SPARK physical education curriculum, teacher training and equipment for each recipient school.



Each partner relied on its strengths to achieve this public health success story. The BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation provided the funding and promoted the grants to middle school administrators across the state. SPARK put together tailored packages to optimize the \$10,000 grants, collected the applications and developed an objective process for selecting the winners.

"These 20 Shape the State schools demonstrated a need and the desire to take their students' health to a new level," said Calvin Anderson, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee senior vice president of corporate affairs and executive director of the Foundation. "We look forward to seeing them use these tools to transform their students' fitness this year."

For More Information

If you have any questions about SPARK or on becoming a Participating Eligible Purchaser for this national agreement, contact [Anca Burke](#) at 312.297.5662.

To learn more about the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation's partnership with Spark, contact [Kathy Bingham](#) at 423.535.7163.



SPARK is one of two national suppliers for diabetes and childhood obesity prevention. Similar to the Tennessee Health Foundation model, Plans can partner with SPARK to develop customized projects designed to address the needs of local communities. SPARK offers Blue Plans award-winning, research-based programs with four main content areas: Physical Education (PE), Early Childhood, After School, and Coordinated School Health. SPARK has experience in all 50 states and can customize a project to fit the regional needs of each Plan.

SPARK also helps educators find physical education grants. For more information on SPARK, visit <http://www.sparkpe.org>.