



news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 8, 2008

CONTACT: Angela Feig
Senior Corporate Communications Consultant
Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield
636 Grand Avenue, Station 111
Des Moines, Iowa 50309
515-245-4551
feigab@wellmark.com

The Wellmark Foundation Funds Three Health Improvement Projects in South Dakota

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Wellmark Foundation funded three health improvement grants in South Dakota totaling \$411,316 at its recent board of directors meeting. In 2008, The Wellmark Foundation’s funding efforts will seek to facilitate programs targeting childhood obesity prevention, and community-based wellness and prevention. Organizations receiving two-year grants in these designated health priority areas are listed below.

Childhood Obesity Prevention

- The South Dakota Department of Health in Pierre, S.D., received a \$150,000 grant to develop a childhood obesity prevention program targeting children 2-5 years of age in child care settings. The South Dakota Departments of Health, Social Services and Education will collaborate to assist more than 200 child care facilities across the state to increase vegetable intake and physical activity of this target population.

Community-based Wellness and Prevention

- Sanford Research/USD in Sioux Falls, S.D., received a \$141,316 grant to expand a wellness and health education project in South Dakota elementary schools. A 2007 Wellmark Foundation grant funded the initial project, which created and piloted a coordinated health education curriculum for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- The South Dakota Department of Health in Pierre, S.D., will use a \$120,000 grant to implement a project through the *All Women Count!* Program that will provide breast cancer screenings for low-income and underinsured South Dakota women who are not served by other funding sources. Dedicated outreach to Native American women will be initiated to address documented health disparities.

The Wellmark Foundation has provided nearly \$14.7 million to fund 406 health-related grants in Iowa and South Dakota since 1997, including \$1,739,233 this cycle. “The Wellmark Foundation collaborates with non-profit and governmental organizations in Iowa and South Dakota to positively impact the health outcomes of individuals and communities in our states,” says Matthew McGarvey, director of The Wellmark Foundation. “We had an excellent group of applications in this first round of grants under our new funding priority areas of childhood obesity prevention, and community-based wellness and prevention. We are confident that collectively,

this group of projects will make great strides in improving the health of individuals and communities across South Dakota,” explains McGarvey.

The Wellmark Foundation is a private, non-profit foundation created by Wellmark, Inc., doing business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. Due to the Foundation’s recent significant support toward disaster relief efforts, the timeline for the second 2008 community responsive grant cycle has been modified. Letters of Interest (LOIs) are now due on September 23, 2008. Learn more about this funding opportunity during a grant applicant teleconference on July 21, 2008. For teleconference and LOI details, visit the Foundation’s Web site at www.wellmark.com/foundation. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield and The Wellmark Foundation are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.