

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Expands Commitment  
to Fighting Food Insecurity with \$450,000 Support to Two Missouri Hunger Relief Organizations**

*Southeast Missouri Food Bank and Aging Ahead will be able to use Anthem's support  
to increase the impact of their work to support Missourians in need*

St. Louis, MO (May 25, 2021) – Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Missouri announced today \$450,000 support of Southeast Missouri Food Bank and Aging Ahead that will help acquire more food and organize more distribution events for the many families in southeast Missouri and the St. Louis area facing hunger. Nearly one in six Missouri residents lacks reliable access to healthy food – according to data available at [“Close to Home,”](#) a social driver of health information tool available through Anthem, Inc., the parent company of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

“Anthem has been connected to the Missouri community for nearly 90 years and is committed to doing our part in improving the communities in which we operate,” said Neil Steffens, President of Anthem’s Medicare Central Region. “We know that food insecurity can be one of the most significant barriers to a healthy life, especially given the challenges related to the pandemic. We will increase the impact of our work by collaborating with Southeast Missouri Food Bank and Aging Ahead in their efforts to help individuals in need.”

Southeast Missouri has long had some of the highest rates of hunger and poverty in the state, and the pandemic only made a dire situation worse. At the height of the pandemic an estimated 30 percent of children and 20 percent of adults were considered food insecure, meaning the family didn’t have the resources to acquire enough healthy food. The food bank now serves about 70,000 individuals monthly. Funds from Anthem’s support will be used to acquire 36,000 pounds of food, translating into 30,000 meals annually distributed throughout the food bank’s 16-county service area.

“Partners like Anthem play a critical role in providing reliable resources for us to acquire and distribute enough food to vulnerable families in our area who temporarily need a helping hand,” said Southeast Missouri Food Bank Chief Executive Officer Joseph Keys. “Accessing nutritious food is important to the overall health of the population we serve.”

By addressing both social isolation and food insecurity through their partnership with Aging Ahead, Anthem will help ensure individuals and their caregivers in St. Louis, St. Charles, Jefferson, and Franklin counties are not forgotten. The three-year agreement will provide over 7,500 meals annually to homebound older adults, virtual and in-person programming, newsletter distribution, and social media outreach to thousands.

“For nearly 50 years, we have been supporting older adults remain healthier and independent by giving them access to quality programs, services and resources that meet their health needs,” said Lisa Knoll, CEO from Aging Ahead. “We are grateful for partnerships with organizations like Anthem because we simply would not be able to fully meet the needs of our communities without their generous support.”

This latest financial commitment from Anthem is part of the company’s ongoing efforts to address food insecurity, which includes a three-year commitment to St. Louis Area Foodbank that helps the foodbank deliver more than 1.5 million meals to St. Louis area residents.

For more information on how to get connected with food assistance services or to donate and support the food banks' programs, please visit [www.semofoodbank.org](http://www.semofoodbank.org) and [www.agingahead.org](http://www.agingahead.org).

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### **About Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield**

In Missouri (excluding 30 counties in the Kansas City area) Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of RightCHOICE® Managed Care, Inc. (RIT), Healthy Alliance® Life Insurance Company (HALIC), and HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates administer non-HMO benefits underwritten by HALIC and HMO benefits underwritten by HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates only provide administrative services for self-funded plans and do not underwrite benefits. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield names and symbols are registered marks of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. Additional information about Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Missouri is available at [www.anthem.com](http://www.anthem.com). Also, follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/anthemBCBS](https://www.twitter.com/anthemBCBS) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/AnthemBlueCrossBlueShield](https://www.facebook.com/AnthemBlueCrossBlueShield).

### **About Southeast Missouri Food Bank**

The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build healthy communities. The food bank provides food to 143 charitable and disaster relief programs in Southeast Missouri. These member agencies include food pantries, soup kitchens, domestic violence and homeless shelters. Southeast Missouri Food Bank also holds regular mobile food distributions and provides monthly boxes of food to 5,350 senior citizens and weekend backpacks of food during the school year to nearly 1,200 students in 32 school districts. The food bank's 16-county coverage area includes Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard, and Wayne counties. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or scheduling a time to volunteer. Visit [SemoFoodBank.org](http://SemoFoodBank.org) for more information.

### **About Aging Ahead**

Aging Ahead's mission is 'supporting individuals through the journey of aging' and as one of 10 Area Agencies on Aging in Missouri has been providing supportive services in St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin and Jefferson counties since 1973. Adults 60 and older count on Aging Ahead to provide nutritious meals, connection to resources and supportive services like Meals on Wheels, Senior Centers, Caregiving Support, Healthy Living Programs, Case Management and much more. Our Community Options Specialists supported 11,379 individuals and their caregivers in 2020 and our nutrition program delivers over 3200 daily meals to homebound seniors struggling with food insecurity. To learn more about Aging Ahead and how to get involved, donate and support us, please visit [www.agingahead.org](http://www.agingahead.org)

### **Media Contacts:**

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield  
Hieu Nguyen, Public Relations Director  
[hieu.nguyen2@anthem.com](mailto:hieu.nguyen2@anthem.com)  
202-510-8848

Southeast Missouri Food Bank  
Lisa Church  
[lchurch@semofoodbank.org](mailto:lchurch@semofoodbank.org)  
573-471-1818