For Lehigh Valley employers, trust matters

By Vicki Doulé

I've lived in the Lehigh Valley my entire life. Over the years, I've watched businesses grow, new employers put down roots, and communities across the region evolve and thrive.

Through all that change, one thing has remained constant: trust matters.

That is especially true when employers make decisions about a health plan. Those decisions affect far more than a benefits package. They impact employees and their families, organizational finances, and an employer's ability to attract and retain the people it needs to succeed.

That's why business leaders need a partner that understands those realities. They need an organization that listens before acting, provides clear and useful guidance, and remains focused on creating meaningful value for employers and their employees.

At Capital Blue Cross, we've spent nearly 90 years working to earn that trust in the communities we serve.

Our roots trace back to local hospitals and doctors coming together during the Great Depression to help make healthcare more affordable and accessible. That mission continues to guide us today.

In my role as Lehigh Valley Executive for Capital, I've learned that trust isn't something you can claim. It has to be earned through listening, being transparent, and developing a genuine understanding of the communities you serve.

Being a not-for-profit health plan means the people we serve come first. We don't answer to shareholders or focus on short-term returns. Our responsibility is to our members, employers, healthcare providers, and communities, and that focus helps guide our decisions.

That responsibility is reflected in how healthcare dollars are used. About 90 cents of every premium dollar Capital Blue Cross receives is used to pay for our members' healthcare. The remaining 10 cents supports the people, services, and capabilities that help members get greater value from their coverage, including care coordination, health education, and responsive customer service.

For employers, responsible stewardship matters. Every dollar invested in employee healthcare must work hard for the organization and the people who depend on it. Our job is to help employers better understand their options, navigate an increasingly complicated healthcare environment, and make informed decisions for their workforces.

That commitment is reflected in our recently extended partnership with the Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare, which helps area employers offer their employees access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare solutions while addressing the evolving needs of their organizations and employees.

Showing up for employers also means staying close to the market. The needs of a Lehigh Valley manufacturer may be different from those of a school district, a healthcare organization, or a growing small business. Local presence gives us the opportunity to listen, understand those differences, and respond with greater relevance.

That dedication extends beyond healthcare. Since 2022, Capital Blue Cross has supported more than 286 nonprofit and community organizations across the Lehigh Valley, investing in initiatives ranging from healthy schools and food insecurity to community development. We believe strong businesses depend on strong communities, and both require long-term investment.

For me, that's what trust looks like in practice. It means listening before acting. It means communicating openly. It means building lasting relationships that endure beyond a single decision or contract. Most importantly, it means continuing to look for ways to deliver value to employers and the people who work for them.

The Lehigh Valley will continue to grow and change, and the challenges facing employers will change with it. Capital Blue Cross is committed to being present through that change, working alongside local business leaders to support healthier employees, stronger organizations, and a vibrant region.

Trust cannot simply be claimed. It must be earned. We intend to keep earning it every day.

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