



## **TRUTH INITIATIVE® AND BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA TEAM UP TO HELP MILLIONS QUIT TOBACCO**

*EX® Program Brings Quit Smoking Tools to Blue Shield of California Wellvolution Network of Digital Health Solutions*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 18, 2020)** – It's been known for decades that tobacco use is deadly. Now, in the context of a global pandemic of respiratory illness, it is even more important for people to quit. Of the 49 million Americans who use tobacco, nearly 70 percent of smokers and 60 percent of e-cigarette users want to stop. To make evidence-based digital support to quit easily accessible to more than four million members, Blue Shield of California (BSC) is teaming up with the [EX® Program](#) by Truth Initiative, a national public health organization that is inspiring lives free from smoking, vaping and nicotine.

Available through the BSC digital health platform Wellvolution — built in collaboration with Phoenix-based Solera Health — the EX Program joins a network of clinically proven health tools available online for BSC consumers. Through the EX Program, BSC members will have access to a personalized quit plan, live chat coaching and medication guidance from tobacco treatment specialists, 24/7 peer support from a thriving social community, interactive quitting tools and videos, and tailored text messaging. The program is available at no cost to members enrolled in Blue Shield's fully insured employer-sponsored plans or its individual and family plans.

“Joining the Wellvolution network of best-in-class health-management and wellness tools is a natural fit for us, because providing on-demand access to clinically proven resources has always been a critical component of our quit-tobacco offerings,” said Jenn Gendron, Head of Development, Innovations at Truth Initiative.

“The vast network of Blue Shield is helping us expand our reach to bring evidence-based support and lifesaving tools to help even more members quit, which is especially critical now as new data continues to connect smoking with adverse outcomes of COVID-19,” Gendron continued. “Recent research also shows that e-cigarettes are a potential risk factor for the coronavirus.”

Developed in collaboration with Mayo Clinic, the EX Program is an enterprise-level, digital tobacco cessation program designed for employers and health plans. The EX Program grew out of Truth Initiative's field-leading research and long history of building engaging digital interventions. To date, more than 910,000 participants have enrolled in EX, developing the skills and confidence that are critical for quitting tobacco successfully. Research has shown that following the EX quit plan quadruples a tobacco user's chance of quitting. In response to the e-cigarette epidemic, in 2019, the EX Program grew to include cessation support for e-cigarettes, as well as resources for parents who want to help their child quit vaping.

**About the EX Program:**

The EX Program is the only quit-tobacco program that combines the scientific leadership in digital tobacco solutions from Truth Initiative with a proven treatment model from Mayo Clinic. This program provides the personalized support that tobacco users—smokers, vapers, and chew tobacco users—need for the behavioral, social, and physical aspects of addiction. The EX Program includes a personalized quit plan with interactive exercises; live chat coaching with experts; the longest-running and largest community of current and former tobacco users; text messaging tailored to the participant; and quit medication delivered to the participant's home. Clients receive ongoing program performance reports, promotional materials, a dedicated client success manager, and more. Visit [www.theexprogram.com](http://www.theexprogram.com) to learn more.

#### **About Truth Initiative:**

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization that is inspiring lives free from smoking, vaping and nicotine and building a culture where all young people reject tobacco. In 2020, we are celebrating 20 years of saving lives and preventing millions of youth from smoking. Our impact has helped drive the teen smoking rate down from 23% in 2000 to an all-time low of 3.7% in 2019. The truth about tobacco and the tobacco industry are at the heart of our proven-effective and nationally recognized truth® public education campaign. truth has also recently taken on the youth epidemics of vaping and opioids. Our rigorous scientific research and policy studies, community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco and innovation in tobacco dependence treatment, are also helping to end one of the most critical public health battles of our time. Based in Washington D.C., our organization, formerly known as the American Legacy Foundation, was established and funded through the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. To learn more, visit [truthinitiative.org](http://truthinitiative.org).

#### **About Blue Shield of California**

Blue Shield of California strives to create a health care system worthy of our family and friends that is sustainably affordable. We are a nonprofit, independent member of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association with 6,800 employees, more than \$20 billion in annual revenue and 4.3 million members. Founded in 1939 and headquartered in San Francisco, Blue Shield of California and its affiliates provide health, dental, vision, Medi-Cal and Medicare health care service plans in California. The company has contributed more than \$500 million to Blue Shield of California Foundation since 2002 to have a positive impact on California communities. For more news about Blue Shield of California, please visit the News Center at [www.news.blueshieldca.com](http://www.news.blueshieldca.com). Or follow along on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), or [Facebook](#).

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