

Press Contact:
Leah Sinderbrand, Skai Blue Media
Leah@skaibluedmedia.com (215) 625-7988

Economy League and Independence Blue Cross Launch Well City Challenge to Seek Community Solutions for Addressing Millennial Health

PHILADELPHIA (OCT 19, 2020) – On Oct. 26, the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia (ELGP) and Independence Blue Cross (Independence) are joining forces to launch the **Well City Challenge** to take a deeper dive into millennials' physical and mental health challenges -- and they are looking for home-grown, community-generated concepts to improve them. Millennials, the largest population in the United States, are the most educated and will be the largest wealth generators over the next two decades, yet they are on track to be in poorer health than previous generations.

The challenge was inspired by the **2019 Blue Cross Blue Shield Health of America report** "[The Health of Millennials](#)," which found that millennials are suffering from more physical and mental health challenges than previous generations, including double-digit increases in 8 out of 10 top health conditions. A new 2020 Health of America [report](#) released this month found that nearly one third of millennials have a behavioral health condition, with significant increases in the prevalence of conditions like major depression (43%), ADHD (39%) and substance use disorder (SUD) (17%) since 2014.

"Building on the 2019 Health of America report on millennial health and the 2020 follow-up report on millennial behavioral health, we know that the well-being of an entire generation is at risk," said Marcy Rost, executive vice president and chief strategy and communications officer for Independence. "So we are taking action to raise awareness of the threat and engage our partners and the community to find solutions. We are proud to support the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia and the Well City Challenge and we look forward to seeing the most creative minds in our region go to work on this initiative."

The Well City Challenge seeks community-oriented ideas to address and improve these mounting millennial physical and mental health challenges. The program begins with a call for applicants with innovative ideas that could be developed into pilot programs. Selected semi-finalists will be paired with mentors from within the Economy League's network to help refine the concept, moving to a virtual "Shark Tank"-like pitch competition with over \$50,000 in prizes. Pitch competition winners will then move into an accelerator to pilot their ideas and can receive an additional \$50,000 in seed investments.

"We are all in this together, but we also know that the needs of our communities are as diverse as the communities themselves," says Nick Frontino, managing director of the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia. "While [WCC] is a pitch competition and accelerator at its core, you don't have to bring anything more than a great idea to the table. We have a team and resources to help you do the rest."

The Challenge isn't just for millennial startups or techies -- it's for any Philadelphian with an idea for cultural and community-centric concepts that will creatively explore millennial health and mental health in three areas: Mind/Body, Food and Nutrition, and Community/Social Connection. "We chose these three themes because we saw the most opportunity for meaningful community dialogue, as well as the opportunity to fuel collaborations and create

connectedness,” said Frontino. “During this pandemic, we have seen major disparities in health. We believe that there is a need and opportunity for ideas as millennials seek more mindful health practices, and ways to counter their social isolation and anxiety due to being in quarantine”.

Interested innovators can apply online at <http://economyleague.org/wellcity> starting Oct. 26 through Nov. 20. Follow the hashtags **#WellCityChallenge** and **#WellCityChallengePHL** for more information and announcements on challenge participation, upcoming giveaways and virtual events, and giveaways.

About ELGP: The Economy League of Greater Philadelphia addresses critical issues facing Greater Philadelphia by providing impactful research, connecting diverse leaders, and advancing shared solutions. We envision a thriving Greater Philadelphia region powered by informed and collaborative leadership. Since its founding in 1909, the Economy League has believed that high-quality analysis and practical insight about the region’s most important challenges and opportunities, combined with collaborative, cross-sector leadership are crucial drivers of prosperity in Greater Philadelphia.

About Independence: [Independence Blue Cross](#) is the leading health insurance organization in southeastern Pennsylvania. With our affiliates, we serve 8 million people nationwide. For more than 80 years, we have been enhancing the health and well-being of the people and communities we serve. We deliver innovative and competitively priced health care products and services; pioneer new ways to reward doctors, hospitals, and other health care professionals for coordinated, quality care; and support programs and events that promote wellness. To learn more, visit ibx.com. Connect with us on Facebook at facebook.com/ibx and on Twitter at [@ibx](https://twitter.com/ibx). Independence Blue Cross is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

###