

NEWS RELEASE**BCBSNC Contact:** Michelle Douglas, michelle.douglas@bcbsnc.com**BCBSNC Media Line:** 919-765-3005**BCBSNC Online Newsroom:** <http://mediacenter.bcbsnc.com>**For Immediate Release:** Sept. 26, 2012**Health Innovation Challenge Winners Earn \$20,000 to Implement
Obesity-Fighting Ideas Statewide***BCBSNC Supports New Innovations to Improve the Health of North Carolinians*

- IN-R-FOOD, The Walking Classroom and Sqord were chosen from 11 finalists to further develop their original, innovative ideas to reduce obesity in North Carolina.
- Winners will receive \$20,000 from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC). All 11 finalists have already received mentoring or support from Bull City Forward and Queen City Forward.
- The Health Innovation Challenge launched in March and invited North Carolina's entrepreneurs, community leaders, citizens and university students to submit solutions to help reduce obesity across the state.

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. – In the last two decades, obesity rates have doubled across the state – amounting to almost 2 million obese North Caroliniansⁱ. Today, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC), Queen City Forward, Bull City Forward and the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) announced the winners of the [2012 Health Innovation Challenge](#). IN-R-FOOD, The Walking Classroom and Sqord will receive \$20,000 each, in addition to the mentoring support already provided to implement their innovative, original ideas to tackle obesity statewide.

“Every year, obesity costs our state billions of dollarsⁱⁱ, so we came up with a completely different approach to address this pressing issue,” said Brad Wilson, BCBSNC president and CEO. “These new ideas will help North Carolinians lose weight and improve their overall health. We are proud to support these organizations as they bring their ideas to life.”

Selected from 11 finalists, the winners are:

- **[IN-R-FOOD](#)** (Durham, N.C.): an iPhone/Android® app that allows users to scan barcodes on foods to see their nutritional value.
- **[The Walking Classroom](#)** (Chapel Hill, N.C.): a fitness program that allows fifth graders to listen to podcasts based on school curriculum while taking brisk 20-minute walks.
- **[Sqord](#)** (Durham, N.C.): an incentive-based game sparking kids' exercise using wrist-worn accelerometers.

“Over the past three months, we’ve had the opportunity to coach the Challenge finalists as they developed their ideas to address obesity in our state,” said Christopher Gergen, Bull City Forward executive director. “We enjoyed supporting IN-R-FOOD, The Walking Classroom and Sqord as they developed their ideas to make North Carolina a healthier place to live.”

Launched in March 2012, the Health Innovation Challenge invited North Carolina’s entrepreneurs, community leaders, citizens and university students to submit solutions to help reduce obesity across the state. The Challenge attracted ideas from more than 60 North Carolina-based operations and individuals.

“When we launched the Challenge, we hoped to find health-improving solutions that were sustainable in North Carolina,” said Anita Brown-Graham, Institute for Emerging Issues director. “The three winners exceeded our expectations. We are certain our winners will be able to make a real difference.”

To learn more about the winners of the Challenge, visit <http://www.healthinnovationchallengenc.com/>, [BCBSNC’s Facebook page](#) or follow [@BCBSNC](#) on Twitter.

About BCBSNC:

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is a leader in delivering innovative health care products, services and information to more than 3.6 million members, including approximately 900,000 served on behalf of other Blue Plans. For 78 years, the company has served its customers by offering health insurance at a competitive price and has served the people of North Carolina through support of community organizations, programs and events that promote good health. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina was named one of the World’s Most Ethical Companies by Ethisphere Institute in 2012. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Visit BCBSNC online at bcbsnc.com.

About Bull City Forward and Queen City Forward:

Bull City Forward and Queen City Forward are community efforts working to dramatically increase the creation, scale, and impact of social enterprises in Durham, NC and Charlotte, NC. We are guided by the conviction that in purposefully recruiting, enabling, and scaling social enterprises and socially driven entrepreneurs, Durham can create a robust cluster of innovation for the region that will spur economic development, improve the lives of citizens, and produce a new model of urban development. Thus, the mission is “to enable entrepreneurs to create positive change.” www.bullcityforward.org www.queencityforward.org

About IEI:

The Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) is dedicated to North Carolina’s future competitiveness. By supporting collaboration among individuals from all sectors and areas of the state, IEI builds an enduring capacity for progress. www.emergingissues.org.

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ⁱ [News & Observer, 2012](#)

ⁱⁱ [F as in Fat, Trust for America’s Health, 2012](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ ® The cross and shield are registered marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association; all other marks are the property of their respective owners.