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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Facing Hunger Foodbank and Highmark to partner on new initiative

Huntington, WV – Facing Hunger Foodbank has been selected by Highmark as a partner for their new (un)Hungry initiative they are launching this week. The (un)Hungry initiative is multi-faceted community movement designed to address food insecurity during the holidays. The initiative is designed to raise awareness and complement existing food and monetary donations during the holiday season, when corporate and individual giving tends to increase.

In West Virginia, approximately 15.7% of households were food insecure in 2024, a rate that ranks second in the nation. This affects over 277,000 people, including 71,140 children, with the state ranking first nationally for childhood food insecurity.

Facing Hunger Foodbank joins Highmark in recognizing that families dealing with hunger also face poor health outcomes such as higher rates of chronic diseases.

“Facing Hunger Foodbank has enjoyed a long partnership with Highmark, and we believe that this partnership has provided a firm foundation of understanding hunger in our service area and across the state, hence this development of the (un)Hungry Initiative to further reflect the continuation of Highmark’s deep and long-standing commitment to improving food insecurity both locally and nationally,” said Cynthia Kirkhart, Chief Executive Officer of Facing Hunger Foodbank. “We’re excited to be a part of this effort and look forward to the successful implementation and operationalization of the initiative.”

The Highmark WV Charitable Fund for Health has been a supporter of Facing Hunger Foodbank in the past and has previously provided crucial funding for the organization’s ‘Medically Tailored Food Box Distribution Program’. Additionally, in 2025, Highmark Health Option WV launched its “Farm-to-Family” initiative, directly distributing thousands of pounds of fresh produce to local West Virginia families.



“Food insecurity is a pervasive challenge that impacts the health and well-being of our communities, and Highmark has been actively addressing this challenge for years,” said Kenya T. Boswell, senior vice president of Community Affairs for Highmark Heath and President of the Highmark Foundation. “With (un)Hungry, we are igniting a movement that builds on our significant ongoing efforts and our long-standing partnerships with regional food banks. It takes a neighborhood to feed a neighborhood, and we are committed to uniting communities to provide resources to and connect those in need with essential resources and nourishment and contributing to a future free from food insecurity.”

Highmark has assisted with screening over 2 million individuals for basic health needs, developing high-performing social care networks and creating medically tailored meal-programs in conjunction with their sustained efforts and strategic approach to improving health and reducing preventable healthcare costs.

Over the past two years, through partnerships with major healthcare provider systems in West Virginia, Highmark has supported programs such as “Healthy Neighborhood” and “Food for Mountaineers,” which provides prefunded debit cards for eligible patients to purchase nutritious food at various retailers, including those offering fresh produce.

To learn more about the (un)Hungry initiative, watch the animated film, make a donation to Facing Hunger Foodbank or your regional food bank or to find help, please visit unHungry.org.

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Facing Hunger is a 501 (c)3 Non-Profit organization affiliated with Feeding America, the largest hunger relief agency in the United States. The mission of Facing Hunger is to help feed hungry people by distributing nutritious food and grocery products through our 300 pantry/agency network. We serve approximately 130,000 food insecure individuals, including over 37,000 children. Our service area includes 12 West Virginia counties, four counties in northeastern Kentucky, as well as Lawrence County, Ohio. Please join us in these efforts. Visit our website at www.facinghunger.org

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield West Virginia serves approximately 250,000 members through the company’s health care benefits business and hundreds of thousands of additional members through the BlueCard program. Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of West Virginia holds the largest share of the commercial market, and more West Virginians carry a Blue Cross Blue Shield card than any other insurance carrier in the state. Highmark West Virginia employs approximately 600 people and serves as a key economic driver in the state with its total economic impact reaching \$352 million.