

COMMUNITY ACCESS NAMES RADHIKA VARS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NEW YORK, April 19, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Community Access has named Radhika Vars, Associate Vice President of Behavioral Health at Empire BlueCross BlueShield/Amerigroup Corporation, as the newest member of its Board of Directors. Community Access is a non-profit organization that expands opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy, and healing-focused services.

"We are delighted to welcome Radhika Vars to our Board," said **Cal Hedigan, Chief Executive Officer of Community Access**. "Radhika's extensive experience in the behavioral health field will prove to be instrumental in helping drive Community Access' mission forward. Community Access helps so many people living with mental health concerns live healthier, self-determined lives, and Radhika's added leadership and involvement will help us continue this work."

Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus is well-known for its commitment to improving the health of the people in the communities it serves – and Community Access appreciates the substantial focus that Empire places on mental health and wellness initiatives, especially for New Yorkers who too often lack access to quality health care, treatment, and opportunities to participate in the community. In honor of the company's dedication to involving mental health peers in its workforce, Community Access recently unveiled the Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus Learning Lab at our award-winning Howie the Harp Advocacy Center in Harlem.

Radhika Vars shared, "I am honored to join the Board at Community Access - one of the most essential nonprofits in New York City - and to work toward its mission to improve access to life-changing mental health, housing, crisis, and job development resources and services for vulnerable New Yorkers. As a mental health executive, I know that we all win when people have access to quality,



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community-based mental health services that offer a real path forward for recovery and reclaiming lives."

As Director of Behavioral Health Services at Empire, Radhika has gained vast knowledge in operations, new product and program implementation, and the skills necessary to build and maintain customer relationships. She is highly skilled in ensuring the provision of quality and ethical clinical programs that result in positive patient outcomes and demonstrates leadership ability to motivate teams to deliver services that meet organizational goals. Before her current position, Ms. Vars was the Senior Program Director

at Beacon Health Strategies. She obtained her BA in Sociology from Stella Maris College, her MA in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and her MS in Counseling from the University of Bridgeport.

About Community Access

Founded in 1974, Community Access is a provider of supportive housing and support services in New York City for people living with mental health concerns. Rooted in the simple truth that people are experts in their own lives, Community Access expands opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy, and healing-focused services. Community Access provides person-centered services that help people pursue goals that are important to them – from gaining access to an affordable home, to learning new skills; from re-establishing community ties, to setting goals for the future.

About Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus

Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus (Empire) is the trade name of HealthPlus, LLC, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Serving New Yorkers for over 80 years, Empire BlueCross BlueShield is the largest health insurer in New York supporting more than four million members and more than 38,000 business, union and small employers in New York. Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield is the trade name of Empire HealthChoice Assurance, Inc., and Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield HMO is the trade name of Empire HealthChoice HMO, Inc., independent licensees of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, serving residents and businesses in the 28 eastern and southeastern counties of New York State. Additional information about Empire is available at www.empireblue.com.