



For Immediate Release
December 2, 2009

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CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield Named Title Sponsor of National Half Marathon

8,000 Runners Expected in 2010, Anticipating Doubling Last Year's Participation

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Greater Washington Sports Alliance is proud to announce CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst) as the title sponsor of the National Half Marathon, to be held Saturday, March 20, 2010, in conjunction with the 5th annual National Marathon. With this agreement extending through the 2011 event, CareFirst joins SunTrust Bank (National Full Marathon) as title sponsors of the only marathon run entirely within the District of Columbia.

“We are so excited to have CareFirst on board with this signature event,” said **Robert Sweeney**, President of the Greater Washington Sports Alliance. “The CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield National Half Marathon runs through historical neighborhoods and past Washington, D.C.’s monuments and memorials. It is America’s most prestigious running route.”

Widely viewed as one of the fastest growing half marathons in the country, a sellout field of over 5,000 runners signed up for the National Half Marathon in March of 2009. A significant increase in participation is anticipated in March of 2010 as 8,000 runners are expected to join the 12,000 combined runner field.

“As we look to grow our race and become one of America’s premier half marathons, it is imperative that we align ourselves with partners who share our vision,” said **William Reifsnnyder**, Executive Race Director. “CareFirst brings a healthy message to our brand. Their presence leading up to the race and during the Health and Fitness Expo will be invaluable as we bring further attention to the fact that this race is not only great for the community but personally beneficial to each runner.”

“The National Half Marathon gives the District an opportunity to take center stage for health and wellness, something CareFirst strongly supports throughout our market region,” said **Maria Harris Tildon**, CareFirst Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Community Affairs. “We hope our sponsorship of the event will enhance awareness of the half marathon and draw even more runners to participate.”

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According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 60 percent of adults in the United States do not participate in the recommended amount of regular physical activity, with 25 percent of all adults not active at all. Routine fitness activities, such as training for running events, can help maintain good health and lower the costs associated with life-threatening diseases, such as Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

The 5th Annual SunTrust National Marathon and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield Half Marathon will be held Saturday, March 20, 2010. For more information or to register for the race go to www.nationalmarathon.com

About CareFirst:

In its 72nd year of service, CareFirst, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is a not-for-profit health care company which, through its affiliates and subsidiaries, offers a comprehensive portfolio of health insurance products and administrative services to nearly 3.4 million individuals and groups in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. Through its [CareFirst Commitment](#) initiative and other public mission activities, CareFirst supports efforts to increase the accessibility, affordability, safety and quality of health care throughout its market areas. To learn more about CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, visit our Web site at www.carefirst.com.

About Greater Washington Sports Alliance:

Established in 2003, The Greater Washington Sports Alliance (GWSA) is a regional non-profit sports commission created to foster economic development and civic pride through the power of sports. GWSA's mission encompasses the attraction of sporting events to the region;, the promotion of the regional professional, collegiate and amateur franchises;, the support of youth investment organizations; and the branding of Washington, D.C. as a world class sports destination. For more information on GWSA, visit www.gwsportsalliance.com.

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