

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jackie Dilworth  
YMCA of Metropolitan Washington  
(202) 384-6818

## **YMCA of Metropolitan Washington Introduces Revolutionary Wellness Program for DC's Aging Community**

### **YMCA's *Fit & Well Seniors* Helps DC's Seniors Rediscover the Vibrancy of Life**

**Washington, D.C., November 3, 2010** – CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield ([CareFirst](#)) representatives joined Washington, D.C., Ward 4 Councilmember Muriel Bowser, other council members, and representatives of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington to announce the launch of the YMCA's *Fit & Well Seniors* program. CareFirst has provided \$2,425,000 in grant funding to the YMCA to fund the three-year program.

YMCA's *Fit & Well Seniors* program is a new, fun and interactive wellness program unique to the needs of the senior residents of the District of Columbia. Scientific evidence suggests that seniors are happier and healthier when they participate in groups that are meaningful to them. The program takes a holistic and group-focused approach to optimizing the mind, body and spirit of DC's senior citizens. Through wellness, education and socialization, the YMCA will help them discover that the opportunities to explore interests and find new passions do not cease at a certain age.

"One of the keys to living a long and healthy life is staying fit," said CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield President and CEO Chet Burrell. "Focusing on fitness and wellness is a key part in staying healthy and mitigating the negative effects of many chronic conditions. We are proud to support this effort for seniors in Washington, D.C."

In cooperation with Ward 4 Councilmember Muriel Bowser, DC Department of Parks & Recreation, The Salvation Army, and DC's Office on Aging, the YMCA's *Fit & Well Seniors* program will offer land and water-based fitness classes in all 8 Wards of DC, from the traditional to the revolutionary, from water aerobics to yoga to zumba. It will also incorporate health and lifestyle assessments, inter-generational activities, social clubs, and a *Fit & Well Seniors* mobile unit, which will bring the program to community centers and retirement homes. In addition, transportation services are an essential component to the program. Roughly 37% of DC's residents do not have a vehicle, so the YMCA has incorporated bus services so that no one is unable to participate.

There are more than 100,000 seniors who reside in DC, many of whom are widowed, living on a modest income, and have limited access to activities. Many seniors have also cut back on seemingly non-essential activities. Not only is companionship for this demographic an important concern, but we must also think about their health, personal growth, and access to resources. The numbers are astounding and growing every day, and the YMCA's *Fit & Well Seniors* program is ensuring that DC's aging citizens are taken care of, giving them opportunities to get out of the house, meet new people, and take a vested interest in their health and vitality.