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## **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Employee Receives Award**

TOPEKA, KS, May 2, 2014 — Marlou Wegener, employed with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) as manager of community relations and chief operating officer of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Foundation, received the State Level Ally of the Year Award from the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) at their Empower Gala last Friday night.

The KCSDV State Level Ally of the Year is given to someone who demonstrates a commitment to enhancing victim safety, increasing perpetrator accountability, or working to end or prevent sexual or domestic violence, stalking or dating violence in Kansas. Award winners show sustained leadership and public service in efforts that are consistent with victim-centered, empowerment-based advocacy.

Ms. Wegener has worked with KCSDV for many years in its efforts to increase public awareness and to increase the understanding of the challenges victims face. She has been involved with the statewide Safe Homes Safe Streets awareness event for the last 11 years, often acting as the emcee. Two years ago she served on a committee to recognize the 30th anniversary of the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV).

Ms. Wegener has also been a leader in recognizing the importance of a workplace response to domestic violence. With her assistance, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas was one of the first major employers in the state to implement a workplace policy on domestic violence. She has assisted with efforts to encourage other employers to do the same. Ms. Wegener recognized the critical nature of financial stability for victims. Additionally, she understands the long- and short-term health consequences that domestic and sexual violence has on individuals and on our broader society.

“Ms. Wegener exemplifies everything a state level ally can be,” said Joyce Grover, executive director of KCSDV. “Marlou has helped many Kansans recognize the importance of addressing domestic and sexual violence in our workplaces, in our communities, and in our families,” Grover said, “we can’t do this work without community partners like Marlou Wegener.”

Ms. Wegener received the award at the organization’s Empower Gala held in Topeka on April 25. Nearly 400 people attended the fundraising event.

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Founded in 1982, the purpose of KCSDV is the prevention and elimination of sexual and domestic violence through a statewide network of programs providing support and safety for all victims of sexual and domestic violence and stalking, with primary focus on women and their children; direct services; public awareness and education; advocacy for victims; comprehensive prevention; and, social change efforts. Learn more at [kcsdv.org](http://kcsdv.org).