



MICHAEL P. STARKOWSKI
Commissioner

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November 17, 2008

The Hon. Richard Blumenthal
Attorney General

Jeanne Milstein
Child Advocate

Kevin Lembo
Healthcare Advocate

Dear Attorney General Blumenthal and Advocates Milstein and Lembo:

I am in receipt of your letter addressed to Governor Rell today acknowledging her decision to allow state-contracted health plans to enroll medical providers separately in the HUSKY and Charter Oak programs; and advocating for a new state procurement process that would "reflect the new policy of delinking the two programs."

Please be advised that there is no policy to delink the two programs. The three state-contracted managed care organizations are responsible for providing services and benefits for both HUSKY and Charter Oak beneficiaries. That is a combined responsibility.

As jointly procured earlier this year, HUSKY/Charter Oak has not materially changed in scope. The managed health care providers under contract with the state are still obligated to aggressively recruit providers, enroll them in HUSKY and Charter Oak, and fully coordinate the medical benefits and customer service in the programs. Last Friday's change means only that the enrollment of the providers does not have to be simultaneous. Absent a material change in the duties and requirements of the initial request for proposals, the contract award stands.

If providers and activists who have advocated for separate enrollment of providers are correct, the ability to enroll providers separately should help accelerate the growth of the HUSKY provider networks in Aetna Better Health and AmeriChoice by United Healthcare, along with incumbent contractor Community Health Network of Connecticut. This, in turn, should help smooth and facilitate the continuing transition of HUSKY members from Anthem BlueCare Family Plan and traditional Medicaid into the newly-contracted health plans.

Your statement that you are aware of “at least one major managed care organization that declined to submit a proposal under the current RFP because of the requirement that health care providers join both programs” is puzzling in that you did not identify the organization. If you were referring to Anthem Health Plans Inc., that is not the reason given by the company president at the time of procurement.

In closing, let me emphasize that there is no plan to re-procure managed care health services. Instead, we believe Connecticut is now at a point where everyone should get behind the immediate goal at hand: encouraging the enrollment of additional medical providers. The time for leveraging the process should be past. The time for joining together and publicly advocating with the medical community to join the programs is now. The Governor’s decision last Friday showed flexibility and pragmatism. It is now time for the advocates to be true advocates for children, families, and uninsured adults.

It should not only be the Governor, the Commissioner, state health care staff, and contracted health plans urging the enrollment of providers. The Attorney General should get involved, the Child Advocate should get involved, the Health Care Advocate should get involved in publicly encouraging hospitals and doctors to enroll with HUSKY – and Charter Oak – with Aetna Better Health, AmeriChoice by United Healthcare and/or Community Health Network of Connecticut.

The state has pumped tens of millions of dollars into increased doctor rates. Now is the time to join.

Any ‘adverse impact’ on HUSKY, as your letter puts it, will disappear as more and more providers enroll. Thank you for considering my comments and request that you publicly support our efforts and encourage medical providers who have not already joined the HUSKY and Charter Oak networks to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael P. Starkowski (wjq)". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "wjq" in parentheses at the end.

Michael P. Starkowski
Commissioner

c: The Hon. M. Jodi Rell
Governor