

June 25, 2018

The Honorable Bruce Rauner
Governor of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: Please Sign House Bill 4383 – Ensuring Patient Access to Continuity of Care

Dear Governor Rauner,

As health care providers and advocates, we are consistently looking for ways to improve the Medicaid managed care program for patients and the state of Illinois. Our goal, like that of managed care, is to produce better health outcomes while reducing health care costs. This session, the General Assembly passed legislation that does just that by ensuring that patients have **continuity of care**.

House Bill 4383 gives Medicaid managed care patients the option to remain with their primary care provider (PCP) if their care is disrupted due to a contract termination between their PCP and a health plan. Currently, when a contract is terminated between a health plan and PCP, the patient has to choose a new PCP, oftentimes severing a longstanding patient-provider relationship.

Continuity of care is regarded as one of the core values of primary care and evidence has demonstrated that the strength of a country's primary care system is associated with improved population health outcomes¹. **Continuity of care** also leads to fewer and shorter hospitalizations, decreased use and utilization of emergency rooms, fewer operations, and reduced health care costs².

House Bill 4383 was unopposed by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and garnered 43 total sponsors in the Senate signaling strong, bi-partisan support for the patient-focused change to the state's managed care program in recognition that **continuity of care** leads to better health outcomes for patients and lower health care costs. Senator Dale Righter stated the following on the floor during debate:

“While this is a little bit of a departure away from what sometimes people think is the strict structure of managed care, this weds us to the policy we’ve always been for, which is [the] patient home and allowing someone to keep their primary care physician.”

It's important to note that House Bill 4383 does not trigger a new open enrollment period. It simply allows patients to be proactive and individually select a new health plan to remain with their PCP if they so choose.

The legislation references federal regulations (42 CFR 438.56), cited within Illinois' Medicaid managed care contracts, that recognize the importance of continuity of care and permit patients to switch health plans when there is a “lack of access to providers experienced in dealing with the enrollee's care

needs.” To maintain access to providers in the spirit of the federal regulations, the state should afford the option to patients to switch health plans if they need to do so to maintain continuity of care with their PCP.

Therefore, we respectfully urge you to sign House Bill 4383 as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Access Living

Action for a Better Tomorrow

AgeOptions

AIDS Foundation of Chicago

American Academy of Pediatrics, Illinois Chapter

Champaign County Health Care Consumers

Chicagoland Leadership Council

Citizen Action Illinois

Community Behavioral Healthcare Association of Illinois

Ecker Center for Mental Health

EverThrive Illinois

Gift of Voice

Health Justice Project, Beazley Institute for Health Law and Policy, Loyola Univ. Chicago School of Law

Health and Medicine Policy Research Group

Heartland Alliance

Illinois Academy of Family Physicians

Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities

Illinois Collaboration on Youth

Illinois Primary Health Care Association

Illinois Psychiatric Society

Illinois Public Health Association

Illinois State Medical Society

Legal Council for Health Justice

Mental Health America of Illinois

Mental Health Summit

NAMI Chicago

National Association of Social Workers

Next Steps

Ounce of Prevention Fund

Popovits Law Group, P.C. – Health and Justice Advocates

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Supportive Housing Providers Association

The Arc of Illinois

Transitions Mental Health Services

Cc: Michael Lucci, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, Office of the Governor, State of Illinois

Chris Kantas, Director of Policy for Health Care and Human Services, Office of the Governor, State of Illinois

References

- 1) Starfield, B., Shi, L., & Macinko, J. (2005). Contribution of Primary Care to Health Systems and Health. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 83(3), 457–502. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0009.2005.00409.x>
- 2) Alazri, M., Heywood, P., Neal, R. D., & Leese, B. (2007). Continuity of Care: Literature review and implications. *Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal*, 7(3), 197–206.