

February 16, 2023

Dear Chair Liebling,

We are writing to express concerns with H.F. 693 which requires the state to administer Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare through a third-party administrator, particularly on how member experience could be negatively impacted by moving away from collaborating with Blue Plus as a Medicaid managed care organization.

H.F. 693 is detrimental to the value brought to members through managed care organizations. Blue Plus has a long history of caring for the state's most vulnerable populations and has been a key partner with the State of Minnesota and the Department of Human Services since the inception of Medical Assistance Managed Care in 1974. Blue Cross' Medical Assistance Managed Care program, Blue Plus, currently serves 392,000 members all of whom will lose their health plan including supplemental benefits and the extended services that address social drivers of health that are offered through Blue Plus.

We ask leaders to carefully weigh all the impacts of this proposal to beneficiaries who now have broad access to high quality health care through Blue Plus, a Minnesota non-profit health plan, along with the additional care and services that health plans provide and are treated as a health plan member not a Medicaid recipient.

Managed care plans, like Blue Plus, bring four crucial assets to Minnesota Health Care Programs and members: **Predictability, Accountability, Access, and Member Experience.**

- **Budget Predictability** – Prepaid health plans like Blue Plus take the risk so the state can set a health care budget and stick to it.
- **Transparency and Accountability** – Managed care plans submit dozens of reports weekly, monthly, and annually providing information on all plan activities and payments. We have the infrastructure to meet the many state and federal quality and regulatory requirements. We comply with applicable Medical Loss Ratio (MLR) limits ensuring 85% of every dollar goes directly to patient care or quality improvement activities.
- **Access** – Our contracted providers care for both commercial and state public programs members ensuring state public programs members have access to providers who might not otherwise be willing to serve patients covered by Minnesota Health Care Programs.
- **Member Experience.** As a health plan, Blue Plus can respond quickly to the changing needs of members and the Medicaid population. We provide clear, member friendly communications that help members understand their benefits, informative newsletters and education and wellness programs, operate a Toll-free hotline (24/7), and aid with system navigation and offer case management for complex care needs.

Blue Plus offers additional valuable services directly to our members that complement the work of the provider.

- **BlueRide transportation services** – This team provides customized ride schedules for medical appointments and arranges bus passes, or other ride services for those who live outside a public transit service area. For members who have a disability or special needs, BlueRide will find the type of ride to meet their needs.

- **Improving access to dental care** – Through a variety of innovation solutions, we are partnering to address the needs for dental care providers to serve members, especially in Greater Minnesota. Blue Cross supports mobile dental programs, community events, and collaborates with dental providers to help address other related needs, such as transportation and interpreter services.
- **Addressing Social Drivers of Health** – Managed care is committed to promoting health equity, at Blue Cross these include:
  - **Mobile clinics** – A mobile clinic brings health services to people improving access to health services for underserved populations and those in rural areas.
  - **Bridging cultural and language barriers to help reduce disparities** – We support the work of Community Health Workers (CHW) and other community providers who are part of a local member-centric approach to bridge gaps in the health care system.
  - **Racial and Health Equity** – We have long-supported health equity and the vitality of our state. Integrating racial and health equity is the only way to truly remove structural racism and barriers to inequities and we continue to work hard to integrate this work into all facets of how we serve our members.
  - **Maternal and Child Health** – We have implemented multiple programs to ensure healthy pregnancies and thriving infants. We assess member risks holistically and provide culturally appropriate access to care and support to build healthy families.

Blue Plus provides access to high-quality, holistic, patient-centered care to Minnesotans eligible for Medical Assistance effectively and efficiently. It is our mission, it is our purpose. We urge you to consider the significant impacts H.F. 693 will have on our Minnesota Health Care Programs members.

If you have questions, please contact me or Lin Nelson, Director of Legislative Affairs, at [lin.nelson@bluecrossmn.com](mailto:lin.nelson@bluecrossmn.com).

Sincerely,



Chris Reiten

Vice President, Medicaid

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota

[Christine.Reiten@bluecrossmn.com](mailto:Christine.Reiten@bluecrossmn.com)