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Wheeling Intelligencer
c/o Letter to the Editor
1500 Main Street
Wheeling, West Virginia 26003

Title: What you don't know will hurt you

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR) has done it again! I find it amazing that for an agency that has as much money, clout, and manpower, it is still so derelict at informing the public that "changes are a coming"!

Unbeknownst by many of the providers in health care as well as our patients on West Virginia Medicaid, WVDHHR decided to break up its monopoly on its patient population and disseminate these patients to a handful of MCO's. In theory, that may make sense to the Cabinet Secretary, but how it was implemented is nothing short of a crime against humanity.

WVDHHR decided to break up its Medicaid enrollees in what appears to be a cost cutting effort to not be responsible to receive bills and pay out medical benefits to its enrollees.

For those of you who do not know what an MCO is, it stands for Managed Care Organization. There are 3 that I am aware of in the Ohio Valley. These "traditional" West Virginia Medicaid patients are now being randomly placed in MCO's which may not be part of their physicians' plans. Many physicians have opted out of these MCO's as MCO's are structured under West Virginia law to "allow" less care to patients enrolled than they would have had under traditional Medicaid while requiring physicians to spend more time needlessly requesting "authorizations" to have procedures done when "traditional" Medicaid did not.

To make matters worse, if a physician decides that they want to be enrolled in some of these MCO's, he/she will have to wait 90 days to be "credentialed"! Why should a physician need to become recredentialed when you were already credentialed in WV Medicaid which is the all encompassing entity? The real victim is the patient who may not get to see the PCP or specialist. They can pay cash (which many don't have) or end up in the ER needing Rx refills! How is that helping those who need the most help?

Those enrolled in an MCO will likely receive less medical benefits and procedures while the MCO's rakes in more profit.

In effect, we the tax payer as well as the Medicaid recipient is getting less bang for the buck so to speak. This is happening because WVDHHR created loopholes that allow MCO's to deny participants certain procedures as well as access to health care while if those same patients were in traditional West Virginia Medicaid, they would receive that benefit. Procedures which are currently approved by traditional Medicaid can be called "experimental" and not allowed by an MCO which would be offered to the patient with traditional Medicaid. WVDHHR is not helping anyone except their financial bottom line.

Sincerely

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