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Brackbill, Robert

From: Mary Brougher [mbrougher@benderconsult.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 3:52 PM
To: Brackbill, Robert
Cc: Joyce Bender; Ricco Brusco
Subject: Remarks for the 4/17 Highmark/WPAHS Hearing - R. Brusco/J. Bender - Bender Consulting Services
Attachments: Joyce Bender Testimony - April 17th - PA Insurance Commission.docx

Mr. Brackbill,

I am forwarding the remarks of Joyce Bender, CEO of Bender Consulting Services to you. Ricco Brusco, an account manager for Bender Consulting Services will be presenting Joyce's remarks on her behalf. She will not be in Pittsburgh that day, due to a business travel conflict.

I look forward to receiving the scheduling time frame from you for the 4/17 hearing. Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Thank you for your help. Have a great day!

Best,
Mary

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Tune in to "Disability Matters with Joyce Bender" on Tuesdays at 2 PM ET on www.voice.voiceamerica.com



Recruiting and hiring people with disabilities for competitive career opportunities

Joyce Bender's Testimony

Re: Highmark/West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS) Affiliation
PA Insurance Department Hearing
April 17, 2012

My name is Ricco Brusco. I am an account manager for Bender Consulting Services, Inc., a company headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA that focuses on recruiting and hiring people with disabilities for competitive career opportunities, in the private and public sectors. Our CEO and President, Joyce Bender is unable to be here today, due to her business travel schedule; she has asked me to represent her to share her remarks and they are as follows.

I am delighted to support the Highmark/West Penn Allegheny Health System affiliation. As the founder and CEO of a small business, focused on creating jobs, and ensuring people with disabilities have access to freedom, through competitive employment, I am concerned about the negative impact that rising health care costs have on the community. As an employer, I believe providing excellent health care benefits to my employees is important. Currently, I provide family benefits and pay 100 percent of the health insurance premium for my employees. The Highmark/West Penn Allegheny Health System affiliation will allow for provider competition in western Pennsylvania, which is required to ensure costs are brought under control, for my company and other small and large businesses.

Recent surveys of individuals with disabilities identify employment as their primary concern. Since the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law, by President George H. W. Bush in 1990, we have seen no improvement in the rate of employment for people with disabilities.

Highmark has been a model employer and a recognized national leader in the area of including talented professionals with disabilities within their workforce. They have set the "high mark" for other companies to follow. As a result of the affiliation of Highmark and West Penn Allegheny Health System, I have no doubt that our community will benefit through the creation of more employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The most significant benefit of the Highmark/West Penn Allegheny Health System is choice. All members of our community have earned and deserve choice in health care. Sometimes, people living with disabilities have unique health care needs that require access to specialty health care providers. As a person living with epilepsy, to ensure proper quality of life and medical care, I require access to an epileptologist, a neurologist with a specialization in epilepsy. All members of our community including those of us with disabilities should be able to have the choice to live in all areas within our region, and have access to the health care professionals we require.



Recruiting and hiring people with disabilities for competitive career opportunities

I urge you and your team to expedite the decision to approve the affiliation between Highmark and West Penn Allegheny Health System. Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

It has been my pleasure to share Joyce Bender's remarks with you. Because of Highmark's commitment to the inclusion of all talent, including those of us living with disabilities, I am a tax payer, an engaged community member, and have had a successful career developing and supporting complex financial technology systems, and mentoring others who are living with disabilities as they begin their career journey.

Thank you.