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Bybee, Cressinda

From: Chronister, Ronald <ronald.chronister@bipc.com>
Sent: Monday, February 02, 2015 12:26 PM
To: Bybee, Cressinda
Cc: wdkstomayko@comcast.net
Subject: Response to Public Comment from Ms. Darleen Tomayko
Attachments: HBG1_GENERAL-1914903-v1-Response to Public Comment from D. Tomayko.DOC

Ms. Bybee,

Attached please find Highmark Inc.'s response to the public comment received by the Pennsylvania Insurance Department from Darleen Tomayko. I am providing Ms. Tomayko with a copy of the response with this email.

Ron Chronister

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**BEFORE THE INSURANCE DEPARTMENT
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Statement Regarding the Acquisition of Control of or Merger with Domestic Insurers:

Hospital Service Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania
d/b/a Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania;
First Priority Life Insurance Company, Inc.;;
HMO of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Inc. d/b/a First Priority Health

By

Highmark Inc., a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation

**Response of Highmark Inc. to
Comments of Darleen Tomayko Dated January 7, 2015**

Highmark Inc. (“Highmark”) is responding to the comment from Darleen Tomayko received by the Pennsylvania Insurance Department on January 7, 2015. The comment is numbered as Document 0839 on the Highmark/BCNEPA Cumulative Log page of the Pennsylvania Insurance Department website.

Ms. Tomayko has expressed concerns regarding the proposed merger of Highmark and Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania (“BCNEPA”) based on the content of certain published articles written by BCNEPA’s Vice President of Clinical Operations and Chief Medical Officer on the topic of specialty prescription drugs. Highmark understands that BCNEPA sometimes produces articles of the type cited by Ms. Tomayko as part of BCNEPA’s ongoing commitment to open dialogue with its customers and the communities it serves, and in support of BCNEPA’s goal of proactively working with employers to create and support value-based benefit programs.

Highmark recognizes that specialty prescription drugs provide a significant value for patients who are confronted with difficult conditions requiring treatment. Highmark believes that it is important to coordinate the proper treatment with each patient in order to ensure the delivery of high quality care with attention to patient safety. Patient safety is paramount as these drugs may have serious side effects. Highmark’s Medical and Pharmaceutical policies have been developed using evidence-based literature, as well as guidelines from the specialty societies, to ensure that each patient gets the appropriate treatment.

Highmark notes that numerous publications have highlighted pharmaceutical manufacturers’ responsibility in placing undue burdens on those who purchase health insurance due to the manufacturer’s irrational pricing, particularly for specialty drugs. Highmark believes that prices for specialty drugs need to be rational so that all people

can access affordable, quality care. To this end, Highmark is supportive of reforms at the state and federal levels to ensure a balance between the development of effective treatments and the ability for consumers to actually afford those treatments.

Highmark would like to thank Ms. Tomayko for her comments.

Highmark Inc.
120 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

DATE: February 2, 2015

cc: Darleen Tomayko