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Bybee, Cressinda

From: Gene Brady <hebegebe@sunlink.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 06, 2014 5:02 PM
To: Bybee, Cressinda
Subject: Blue Cross NEPA Proposed Merger Comments
Attachments: BCNEPA Merger Comments.pdf

Attached are the written comments concerning the Application for Approval to Merge with Hospital Service Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania d/b/a Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania with and into Highmark, Inc. Pennsylvania.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 570-825-4331.

Sincerely,
Eugene M. Brady, Executive Director
Commission on Economic Opportunity

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People Helping People.

November 6, 2014

Cressinda Bybee
Senior Insurance Company Licensing Specialist
Company Licensing Division
Insurance Department
1345 Strawberry Square
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Ms. Bybee,

I am submitting these comments as the Executive Director of the Commission on Economic Opportunity. CEO is a non-profit community action agency located in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. CEO has been serving the low-income, elderly and disadvantaged in Northeastern PA since 1966. We provide a wide range of services in the areas of housing and energy assistance, job training, veterans' transitional programs and programs to alleviate homelessness. We are particularly interested in this proposed merger because of our interest in promoting and providing healthy nutrition to our most vulnerable residents. CEO is active in healthy nutrition through its Kids Café and Summer Meals programs, programs that provide both nutrition information and meals to our area's children. But our biggest impact on the health of our clients is through our food bank. Since 1996 CEO has operated the Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank, now a part of the Andrew J. McGowan Center for Healthy Living. At its inception in 1996 it provided food to 18 member agencies and now serves 137 member agencies, it provided 1,078,000 pounds of food in 1996 and 4,814,000 pounds in 2013. It serves residents in four northeastern PA counties – Luzerne, Lackawanna, Susquehanna and Wyoming.

CEO supports the proposed merger because we believe that the terms of the merger will protect our local residents and that the resulting company, with increased resources, will be able to expand the healthcare opportunities available in our community. BCNEPA has always been an important part of our community in providing great products and services but also by demonstrating a commitment to our community and agencies like ours that help the less fortunate. The commitment that BCNEPA has demonstrated we believe will continue under Highmark as it has also demonstrated a commitment to the health and welfare of the

communities in which it operates. This commitment will not only continue but we believe will be greater as a result of this merger. The proposed merger continues to provide for local input, representation and philanthropy while resulting in a greater capacity to address our local health needs. We applaud the recognition in this proposed merger that local communities be heard and continue to be served and we share its interest in addressing the healthcare needs of our community. We look forward to continuing the relationship with Highmark that we have enjoyed with BCNEPA.

Further, CEO has been a customer of BCNEPA for thirty years and has firsthand experience with the benefits of the Blue brand and we are happy to see that the availability of their products and services will continue in the proposed merger.

It is for the reasons above that we support the proposed merger. If you need anything else please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Eugene M. Brady
Executive Director