

CITY OF KINGSTON

Office of the Mayor

mayor@kingston-ny.gov

Steven T. Noble
Mayor



June 1, 2016

Dominic DePiano
Vice President, Network Management
One Liberty Plaza
165 Broadway
New York, NY 10006

Re: Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield and Westchester Medical Center Health Network

Dear Mr. DePiano,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Mayor of the City of Kingston, a small city 90 miles north of New York City. Kingston, like many other municipalities, organizations and businesses, has selected Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield as its primary insurance carrier for its employees, in large part due to the excellent service and support we have come to expect from Empire. Unfortunately, in the past few weeks our confidence has been shaken, as we have learned that the Health Alliance of the Hudson Valley, the major medical provider in our local community, will no longer be considered “in-network” with Empire. The impact of this decision will be that hundreds, if not thousands, of hard working individuals and their families who rely upon the Health Alliance for their medical needs will be forced to change providers for services they would typically access through the conveniently located Health Alliance facilities.

In addition, I have serious concern as to how these changes are communicated. While the Health Alliance will continue to care for individuals in emergency situations, and Empire must cover these cases, the instruction to individuals that they must seek service at other approved providers for non-emergent care may cause some individuals to avoid seeking medical attention for emergency situations, due to the confusing nature of this process. While we will continue to communicate with staff that they should still seek emergency medical care at the Health Alliance facilities, I am sure that you can agree this confusing message is a troublesome side effect of these elongated negotiations.

It is my sincere hope that this discrepancy between Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield and Westchester Medical Center Health Network is resolved in an expedient manner so that we may continue to find the confidence and support in Empire, as we have relied upon for over 20 years.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven T. Noble
Mayor