



For Immediate Release

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The following statement can be attributed to, Deborah Fasser, spokeswoman for the New York State Conference of Blue Cross Blue and Shield Plans (NYSCOP).

“The Governor’s Budget once again attempts to shift the costs of the Early Intervention (“EI”) Program from the state and localities to private citizens who purchase health insurance coverage. This initiative has been proposed by the Governor several times in the past only to be rejected by the Legislature, as yet another hidden tax which will ultimately increase the cost of health insurance for New Yorkers.

Specifically, the proposal requires health plans to pay for certain high cost EI services which are currently paid for by the state and counties. Unlike every other health insurance mandate, however, this proposal expressly precludes the health plan from determining whether the care is appropriate, medically necessary, and whether the provider is properly credentialed to provide the service. In other words, the health plan is not performing medical management or insurance functions, but is simply paying for the service. No different than the many health care taxes paid today, this proposal requires consumers to pay for health care programs which would otherwise be paid for by government.

Forcing health plans to cover the costs of the EI program, and not allowing them to determine appropriate care and control costs by utilizing in-network providers will only increase the cost of coverage, resulting in premiums becoming more unaffordable than they are today.

Providing quality, affordable health insurance coverage for our membership is, and has always been, a priority. This proposal is nothing more than shifting additional costs onto the backs of our members.”

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The New York State Conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans (NYSCOP) is a partnership of Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield and Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield. Together, the two health plans provide comprehensive health coverage for an estimated seven million New Yorkers.

For more information, please visit NYSCOP at: www.nysblues.org.