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January 6, 2020

RE: AN ACT to amend the elder law, in relation to the powers of the commissioner of health in administering the elderly pharmaceutical insurance coverage program

S6646 (Helming)  
A8665 (Jones)

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT**

Submitted on behalf of Excellus Health Plan

Excellus Health Plan supports enactment of this Bill, which would authorize the Commissioner of Health to establish an online system for elderly New Yorkers to apply for the elderly pharmaceutical insurance coverage program (EPIC). The current application process limits residents to applying via fax or regular mail. Allowing for an online application system will allow the EPIC Program to provide prescription drug coverage assistance to more elderly New York residents and improve the application process.

The EPIC Program provides assistance to income-eligible seniors aged 65 and older to supplement their out-of-pocket Medicare Part D drug plan costs. EPIC also covers approved Part D-excluded drugs once a member is enrolled in Part D. EPIC saves eligible seniors money on their prescriptions by supplementing their Medicare Part D plan. According to the Department of Health, the EPIC Program currently helps more than 337,000 seniors. As the cost of prescription drugs continues to outpace inflation, the need to provide prescription drug coverage assistance is of vital importance.

Establishing an online application will provide New York's seniors with an additional option to apply for the EPIC Program. It will also reduce uncertainty and anxiety that may result from using fax or regular mail to access such an important program.

For the foregoing reasons, Excellus Health Plan supports this Bill and urges that it be enacted.

Respectfully submitted,

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