

November 1, 2015

**Written Public Comment: STOP Iowa Medicaid Privatization**

Dear Health Policy Oversight Committee:

Based on comments Gov. Branstad made at a Town Hall in Mason City, our family fears the governor believes the unsubstantiated projections of privatized Medicaid because of his over-simplification of preventative care. Using Des Moines University's employee wellness program as his example shows a **lack of understanding about the all-encompassing, long-term health needs of Iowa's most medically vulnerable**. Families and guardians understand. Unfortunately, we have not been heard – or maybe worse – not believed. Moreover, **we now don't have enough information** to make informed decisions. What *has* been shared raises **grave concerns**.

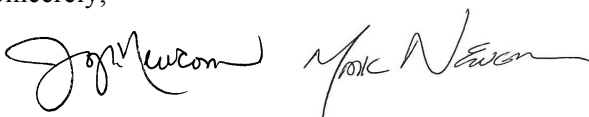
Our 24-year-old son has severe intellectual and physical disabilities. For the majority of his life, Iowa's Medicaid program has assisted us in meeting his needs. Iowa's rush to privatize threatens that. We have been **unable to get adequate information about the quality of the chosen MCOs to assure his continuity of care**. We have participated in multiple public forums and listening posts, yet **basic questions have not been answered**. For instance, to date, **none of the MCOs can share the names of all providers** in their network. In addition, there is **no assurance our current providers will be included**, as the MCOs may not offer adequate reimbursement rates. A quality – *needed* – provider may choose not to participate or be forced to accept a rate that will lead to its eventual demise.

Also, **case managers cannot provide information on their roles in the new system**. One of our greatest concerns is losing them because of a shift to ones supplied by the chosen MCO. The **inherent conflict of interest cannot allow for conflict-free case management** – not when an advocate is rewarded for his or her performance by the MCO denying the services. It certainly **cannot replicate the long-term, supportive relationship of our current case managers**. We appreciate their broad knowledge and keen skills in **accessing local resources to the mutual benefit of our family and the state**.

**We have been pleased with Iowa Medicaid**. Our only troubles have come with denials occurring at the end of a fiscal year. Our family fails to see how the raised allowance for MCO administrative costs will help Iowa Medicaid provide MORE services. We who have become saavy medical consumers know **the numbers do not add up**. Meanwhile, the clock is ticking. When **privatization fails Iowans**, as it has in other states, **our family – not the state of Iowa – will suffer the potential financial and health repercussions**. The state is surely poised for lawsuits, as **no other legal path has been established to protect families** forced to fill the gaps when services drop or fail to be provided.

Please **stop this misguided use of taxpayer funds and trust**. Our friends and neighbors repeatedly share how they are proud their tax dollars provide care for Iowa's poor and disabled. Allowing those public contributions to pad the pockets of corporations and their stockholders (please note that financial analysts are already projecting gains) is a **misuse of public funds**. **It is morally reprehensible this is happening at the expense of Iowa's most medically vulnerable citizens – those who never asked to have it happen and those least likely to have their voices heard.**

Sincerely,



Joy and Mark Newcom  
Guardians / Parents of Stross Newcom  
Forest City, Iowa