

Patty,

I will be in Des Moines on December 7th for the Health Policy Oversight Committee meeting and would like to be one of those who speak to the committee. If I'm not selected to do so, please enter my comments into the written record. I also would be happy to speak to the press or anyone else.

Sincerely,
Gail Murphy
563-599-3575
gjmurphy@mchsi.com

My testimony:

My daughter is on Medicaid. She struggles with some of the things in life that many of us do easily. She has chronic health conditions, which require daily medications and regular doctor visits. She also has mental health issues and has been receiving counseling and support services through another clinic.

She is employed as a cashier at a local grocery store. She is a hard and reliable worker and is good at her job. But like many people in similar situations, that work pays little more than minimum wage, is part-time, and has no benefits. She is currently attempting to find another part-time position to increase her income. Her hope, and mine, is that eventually she will find a full-time position that has benefits and pays enough for her to be self-sufficient.

On November 27 my daughter received a form in the mail stating that she has until December 17th to select one of the four MCO's to manage her health care. She was assigned to *Amerigroup Iowa*, although the letter states that she does not have to stay with that assignment.

I checked the *Amerigroup Iowa* website to see which healthcare providers in Dubuque have signed up to provide services through that MCO. At that time, there was a total of 17: 4 counselors, 1 social worker, 8 physical therapists, 3 chiropractors, and 1 optometrist. If she gets sick or needs a prescription renewed, where is she to go?

My daughter and I both have a lot of questions. I have been unable to determine if either one of the clinics she sees have yet to sign up with any of the MCOs, or if so, which ones. And if they contract with different MCOs, will my daughter be forced to choose between her physical health and her mental health?

There are two hospitals in Dubuque. I have been unable to find out which MCOs they will be associated with.

My daughter is in the Integrated Health Home program and has made significant progress in her quest to become independent. Will those services continue?

And even if more providers do sign up, how is she to make an informed decision when very few providers have even signed on with these MCOs?

Governor Branstad has pushed the privatization of Medicaid through far too quickly and although he claims there will be millions in savings, I have yet to find details on how this would be accomplished. I wonder how for-profit companies will be able to reduce costs. I also worry about the thousands of other Iowans who rely on Medicaid. My daughter is lucky – she has me to help her sort through this confusion and advocate for her. But many other Iowans on Medicaid have no one to help them.

I would prefer that the current system remain in place. It works. If there are inefficiencies, an attempt should be made to correct them. At the very least, implementation of this new system of managing Medicaid in Iowa should be delayed for at least six months. More information is needed so that both healthcare providers and Medicaid recipients can make more informed decisions.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.