



December 4, 2015

Dear Legislative Oversight Committee:

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation and our affiliate, the Epilepsy Foundation of North/Central Illinois, Iowa, & Nebraska, we encourage you to preserve access to quality care for individuals with epilepsy who rely on Medicaid for their healthcare needs as Iowa transitions to Medicaid Managed Care.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of the more than 2.8 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures, including the nearly 28,000 Iowans represented by the Epilepsy Foundation of North/Central Illinois, Iowa, & Nebraska. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy and direct services. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime. For the majority of people living with epilepsy, anti-epilepsy drugs (AEDs) are the most common and most cost effective treatment for controlling and/or reducing seizures, and they must have meaningful and timely access to physician directed care.

Treatment of epilepsy is highly individualized and medical professionals must have the ability to determine the most appropriate treatment available with the fewest side effects. Selection of the appropriate medication to prevent seizures is determined by a number of variables, including type of seizure, seizure frequency, age, gender, and other health conditions. Determining the right medication for a particular person may require trial-and-error, along with close observation of blood levels and side effects. For these reasons the physician and patient need to be assured that the full array of treatment options is available, including alternative formulations of a drug, such as extended release versions that are particularly important for disease management and patient compliance among the individuals with multiple complex and chronic conditions.

We have numerous concerns relating to the fast timeline of Medicaid Managed Care. We have families who were assigned more than one MCO (different MCO for different members of the family), people whose providers are telling them that they do not have enough information to make an educated decision, the phone lines to DHS, as well as the MCOs have long wait times and are difficult to get through, several county case managements have already closed down during this transition process and the list goes on and on. We are concerned that the health condition of our population of people with epilepsy will suffer during the transition process.

The Epilepsy Foundation and the Epilepsy Foundation of North/Central Illinois, Iowa, & Nebraska urge you to preserve access to quality care for individuals with epilepsy who rely on Medicaid for their healthcare needs as Iowa transitions to Medicaid Managed Care. Please do not hesitate to contact Angela Ostrom, chief operating officer and vice president public policy, at aostrom@efa.org or 301-918-3766 with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "BS".

Ben Slack
Executive Director
Epilepsy Foundation of North/Central Illinois,
Iowa, & Nebraska

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip M. Gattone".

Philip M. Gattone, M.Ed
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation