

I was informed via social media today that I could submit a public comment through your address. I apologize if this is reaching you in error.

On Monday, I listened to a ten minute voicemail. It was my best friend, sobbing in fear. This is a type of voicemail that I've been receiving more and more in the past few weeks.

My best friend's sister is in her 30s, but has both intellectual and physical disabilities. Her condition is not one that is easily explained. She has a rare heart condition and requires 24 hour care. Intellectually, she is on the level of a typical three year old. My friend and her family provide in-home care for her sister through Medicaid. They are the primary caregivers.

They've already had to change her provider once, last year, with all of the other disabled Iowans who had to choose a new provider through the privatized system. I remember her calls them: her frustration that they were being forced to choose a plan without knowing what would be covered, her fear that her sister would lose the specialized doctors who know about her rare condition. They were still arguing with care providers this fall, who wanted to send in-home aids to do tasks that my friend's mother is perfectly qualified to do. Since my friend's sister cannot communicate verbally, additional people and stimulus stress her out.

They were finally getting to a comfortable place with treatment when AmeriHealth pulled out of Iowa. My week this week has been filled with sobbing voicemails, anxious phone calls, and panicked text messages as the family scrambles to get care for my friend's sister. They are terrified. They don't know what the new plans will cover, or if the specialized doctors will take the insurance. Her sister is fine, but as my friend says, she is one heart attack away from danger, and they don't even know if they will be able to take her to her providers, or to a hospital, or to an emergency room. They are terrified that she will be removed from in-home care and placed into a home full of unfamiliar people who can't communicate with her. Above all, they are afraid that their new provider will also leave Iowa.

My politics may not match with the Governor's, but just on a factual level, I cannot understand why she believes that the privatized system is a success. The companies running it have been complaining about catastrophic losses, and it's no wonder that they are leaving the state. Their goal is profit, not the peace and mind and well-being of Iowans like my best friend and her family. This political experiment has gone on long enough, and Iowans should no longer have to be the guinea pigs. I hope that our government makes the right decision, and returns Medicaid to state administration.

Thank you for your time and attention. Sincerely;

Dani Ausen
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