

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 27, 2013

Commissioner Mike Kreidler
Washington State Insurance Commissioner
PO Box 40255
Olympia, WA 98504-0255

Dear Commissioner Kreidler,

We are writing today to express our deep concern with the lack of options presented to residents of Clark County in your recent announcement about the Washington Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange). While four health insurance companies were recently authorized to sell in the State based Exchange, those living in Clark County will be required to purchase health care from a single provider. Every county in the State has at least two insurance companies from which to choose, except Clark County. Individuals and families in this region deserve better, and we are respectfully requesting that you work to offer residents here more choices for health care coverage by the time the exchange opens.

It was promised that the 2010 federal health care law would provide competition through its Health Benefit Exchanges. At the State level, the Washington Health Benefit Exchange is supposed to be a marketplace where individuals and families can compare benefits and prices among multiple providers and choose insurance plans that best fit their needs and budgets. It is well established that competition puts downward pressure on price and increases access, quality, service, and innovation in health care. Unfortunately, due to the monopoly granted to a single provider, residents of Clark County will not have the same choices or competition in their region that the rest of the State will have.

Rather than offering improvement in terms of health care choice, access to care, or affordability for residents here, this development seems to be a step backward.

As you know, open enrollment for the Exchange begins October 1, 2013. We urge you to consider the lack of options for residents of Clark County and find a solution that provides them with more choices by that date.

Sincerely,

Jaime Herrera Beutler

U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, 3rd Congressional District

Don Benton

Sen. Don Benton, 17th Legislative District

John Braun

Sen. John Braun, 20th Legislative District

Annette Cleveland

Sen. Annette Cleveland, 49th Legislative District

Curtis King

Sen. Curtis King, 14th Legislative District

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Rep. Charles Ross, 14th Legislative District

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Rep. Monica Stonier, 17th Legislative District

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Rep. Brandon Vick, 18th Legislative District

Sharon Wylie

Rep. Sharon Wylie, 49th Legislative District