



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health (NIOSH)
395 E Street, S.W.
Suite 9200, Patriots Plaza
Washington, D.C. 20201
PHONE: (202) 245-0625
FAX: (202) 245-0628

October 13, 2022

Danielle Brian
Executive Director
Project on Government Oversight
1100 13th Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Brian:

Thank you for your letter of September 19, 2022 to Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), raising the following issues: (1) CDC's selection of entities to provide services under the Nationwide Provider Network contract, the Pharmacy Benefits Manager contract, and the Third-Party Administrator contract; and (2) "the current state of services provided..." under those contracts.

I am pleased to respond on behalf of Dr. Walensky but let me first apologize for the tardiness in answering your letter. I, and the entire staff of the WTC Health Program, have been quite busy addressing the member service performance issues under the two recently awarded contracts for the Nationwide Provider Network and the Pharmacy Benefits Manager contracts raised in your September 19, 2022 letter.

Let me address the performance issues under the recently awarded Nationwide Provider Network and the Pharmacy Benefits Manager contracts. In your letter, you recognized "...that it might take some time for the new companies to get up to speed..." CDC and the Program share your goal of ensuring that "9/11 responders and survivors are receiving competent and timely medical care and support."

CDC and the Program have been working with the new contractors to improve their performance and to resolve the issues facing the members in obtaining needed services. Performance under the new contracts relating to call center wait times, out-of-network providers, priority of payer issues, and prescription access issues have improved, and more improvements are expected. CDC and the Program have taken the performance deficiencies in both contracts very seriously. We have applied the appropriate incentives to the contractors to bring their performance to the level that was required and expected under their contracts.

Currently, we are seeing improvements in contract performance, although we expect further improvements. The Program fully expects improvements in performance that match contract requirements to be sustained throughout the contract term.

The Third Party Administrator (TPA) award is in litigation and any further information should be requested from the Department of Justice.

While the Program deeply regrets the confusion and inconvenience to members occasioned by a less than optimum rollout of the new Nationwide Provider Network and the Pharmacy Benefits Manager contracts, the Program is continuing to work to address every contract performance deficiency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Howard", written in a cursive style.

John Howard, M.D.
Director, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and
Administrator, World Trade Center Health Program