



Local doctors ask Aetna to negotiate fair contract

More patients at risk to lose access to care

As doctors with CHI Health, we've practiced medicine in Nebraska and Iowa for more than 100 years combined, and we're proud to call the Midwest home. When we're not at the hospital or clinic, you can find us at the grocery store, a school play or a Husker or Bluejay tailgate party.

Our mission is caring for our patients, many of whom are neighbors and friends. But our mission is at risk.

CHI Health has been negotiating in good faith with Aetna for more than a year. We are asking for a new, responsible contract that will protect patient choice and access to essential health care services. It will also enable us to attract and retain health care professionals, bring new services to the community, invest in new technology and maintain our facilities.

All of this supports our mission to improve the health of our communities. While CHI Health is committed to working with Aetna to reach fair and reasonable agreements, CHI Health cannot accept a new agreement that fails to address the impact of inflation on the actual costs to deliver health care services to our communities. If new agreements are not reached by November 26, 2024, CHI Health will be out of network for all Aetna commercial network plans.

That's not our idea of a happy Thanksgiving.

If CHI Health is dropped from Aetna's network, thousands of patients will lose access to the caregivers they know and trust. They may be forced to travel out of town or endure long waits to receive care.

Health care is personal. **You know the name of your doctor. Do you know the name of your Aetna agent?**

We realize how important the resolution of these negotiations is to our patients, physicians and hospitals, as well as employers in the communities served by our hospitals and medical groups. CHI Health is doing everything it can to encourage Aetna to continue negotiating and prioritize reaching an agreement.

We are doctors, not accountants. We serve patients, not shareholders.

And our patients are people, not numbers on a spreadsheet.

Our bottom line: We want to continue providing excellent health care. We want insurance companies to work with us to protect patient access.

Many will see this as a dispute between two corporations fighting over the bottom line. While it's regrettable that patients are caught in the middle, the reality is different.

CHI Health is invested in this community. In Fiscal Year 2023, CHI Health generated \$231 million in community benefits, including \$183 million in medical care for 426,000 uninsured or under-insured patients.

CHI Health is a nonprofit organization that has been caring for our community for 130 years. Aetna is one of the nation's largest for-profit insurance companies.

Of course, this means little to patients who may soon be scrambling to find a doctor because CHI Health and Aetna can't settle on a contract. We understand our patients' frustration – and we share it.

We'd rather practice medicine than write op-eds. But we decided to share the message with you because our patients need to know exactly where we stand.

Dr. Cary Ward, Nebraska/Iowa Market President, Internal Medicine

Dr. Lissa Woodruff, Vice President Medical Operations, Internal Medicine

Dr. Scott Frankforter, Vice President Medical Operations, Pathology

Dr. Aaron Robinson, Ear, Nose and Throat Physician

Dr. Anuradha Tunuguntla, Interventional Cardiologist

Dr. Eric Johnson, Primary Care Physician

Dr. Chris Acker, Nebraska/Iowa Market Chief Medical Officer, Emergency Medicine

Dr. Randy Pritza, System Senior Vice President CHI Health Clinic, Cardiology