



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

## Independent Health will continue to cover Medicaid beneficiaries in Niagara County

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ February 5, 2014

| ISSUE: **HEALTH CARE**

Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane) is pleased to announce that Independent Health has agreed to renew its contract with New York State to offer Medicaid Managed Care, known as MediSource, in Niagara County.

“People need access to health care options,” Senator Maziarz said, “and this is good news for consumers in Niagara County. Many of my constituents, including current Independent Health members, community-based organizations, and providers, contacted me with fears that they would lose an important health care partner if Independent Health no longer offered MediSource in Niagara County, so I went to work to try to figure out a solution. Now, the organization’s decision to continue Medicaid coverage in Niagara County should allay concerns of beneficiaries and give hope to future health care improvements.”

Current enrollees in Independent Health’s MediSource program in Niagara County had recently received written notice that they would have to change providers since Independent Health was planning not to renew its contract with the state at the end of February. Independent Health’s decision to continue coverage means that current enrollees will be able to retain their current Independent Health plan.

“Independent Health’s decision to continue coverage is in part based on our ability to identify state and federal funding assistance that could be used by providers to enhance quality,” Senator Maziarz added. “I commend Independent Health for their willingness to remain in Niagara County when other health plans have exited the region, and for their continued commitment to serve a vital segment of our population. The organization clearly has earned a reputation as a community-based payer that is a valued partner with members and providers.”

As a nonprofit health plan, Independent Health was facing unsustainable financial losses to its Medicaid program in Niagara County. These losses were driven by recently carved-in pharmacy benefits and the unique challenges in serving those in Niagara County.

Michael W. Cropp, M.D., President and Chief Executive Officer of Independent Health, said, “It is my longstanding belief that better quality care costs less. The new funding opportunities available at the state and federal levels will support the necessary investment in providers that we believe is crucial to ensure a sustainable improvement in the delivery of community-based, quality care in Niagara County.”

“Improving access and care for Medicaid beneficiaries in Niagara County will lead to better quality, lower costs, and a more sustainable Medicaid program for this community,” added Dr. Cropp.

Sheila K. Kee, Chief Operating Officer at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, added, “Independent Health is a strong supporter of the Niagara community, always going the extra mile to serve its beneficiaries. Niagara Falls Memorial is delighted to continue working with Independent Health on meeting the health care needs of Niagara County residents with Medicaid Managed Care coverage. Working in partnership with Independent Health, we are confident that better health care outcomes can be achieved while squeezing out waste and

reducing costs.”

Independent Health’s MediSource Medicaid Managed Care program is offered through New York State of Health, the state’s official health care exchange.

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