



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John W. Mannion

Onondaga Co. leaders hearing concerns about WellNow and Excellus coverage dispute

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Onondaga County Legislator Julie Abbott says she's heard from more than a dozen people about concerns over possibly losing coverage at WellNow Urgent Care centers if they have Excellus BlueCross BlueShield insurance.

A months-long dispute over reimbursement costs between the company and the insurance provider is now reaching a critical point. If a deal isn't reached, Excellus members won't be covered at WellNow in the new year, meaning a much higher out-of-network cost if they visit after Jan. 1, 2024.

"If we lose WellNow as an option for families covered by Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield, it is going to completely impact what is already a log-jam in our emergency rooms," explained Abbott. "I understand there's a business bottom line for the insurance carriers, but it's hard for me as somebody who represents people, who is a mom, and who really does go to WellNow, and understands the need for those facilities in our community ... I do hope this gets resolved before January."

A spokesperson for Excellus sent CNY Central this statement:

"At this time, members may continue to access WellNow services in accordance with their benefit plan. The contract with WellNow is currently in place and members should not be asked to pay up-front payments beyond their copay or applicable deductible. If a member is asked to pay more than their copay or deductible, they should call Customer Service at the number on the back of their Excellus BCBS member identification card. A member should not be refused services because they are an Excellus BCBS member.

If WellNow leaves our network on Jan. 1, 2023, however, we are committed to helping our members obtain high quality care. We've started outreach to other providers so we can help our members find care. We'll also provide our members with more information, including options for care and coverage details. What kind of coverage members have for out-of-network care will depend on the terms of their benefit plan. Members with questions about their coverage should contact Customer Service."

In October, Sen. John Mannion and Assemblymember Bill Magnarelli wrote to Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, encouraging them to try and find a solution.