Honorable Senators and Representatives,

Thank you for reaching out on behalf of your constituents and our patients with our shared concern regarding Aetna's Medicare Advantage plan ("Aetna MA").

On October 28, BJC Health met with leaders from the Illinois Department of Central Management Services ("IL CMS") to discuss a one-year solution to alleviate the impact of BJC Health ending its contract with Aetna MA on Dec. 31, 2026 (resulting in BJC providers and facilities no longer being in network for State of Illinois retirees as of Jan. 1, 2027). BJC understands Aetna MA is the only Medicare Advantage plan offered to State of Illinois retirees through the Total Retiree Advantage Illinois ("TRAIL") program, and BJC would like to be a good community member until additional options may be made available to State of Illinois retirees.

There were two key conditions BJC detailed in the meeting that enabled BJC to agree to a one-year transition period. Namely, BJC would not continue to be subject to the same significantly adverse policies tied to inappropriate denials and reduced reimbursement for services. These were the primary causes of BJC needing to end its network participation with Aetna MA. Since that meeting, BJC began negotiations with Aetna for the one-year transition period specifically for State of Illinois retirees. The terms and conditions for the compromise were discussed, and Aetna has now agreed to accept BJC's conditions.

The one-year transition agreement was signed by BJC and Aetna today, November 6, and is effective for the 2027 calendar year.

This one-year transition agreement applies only to State of Illinois retirees; those patients will receive letters from BJC informing them of the 1-year agreement. For other retirees enrolled in an Aetna MA group plan who want to stay with BJC as an in-network provider, BJC will consider a similar 1-year transition arrangement and has informed Aetna of this position. Aetna MA individual plan members should consider Original (traditional) Medicare coverage with a Medicare supplement or another Medicare Advantage plan that includes BJC as an in-network provider.

Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period is open now and ends December 7.

To help State of Illinois retirees have a choice and voice in their health care, we urge you to consider legislation to require the Illinois Department of Central Management Services to award contracts to a minimum of two supplemental Medicare plan options if two or more responsive bidders submit bids during the procurement process.

Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Christian Morgan
Vice President, Government Relations
BJC Health

Source: https://www.firstalert4.com/2026/11/06/bjc-health-aetna-give-illinois-retirees-1-year-transition-period-change-coverage/

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