



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

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CHAIR
Committee on Public Health

January 24, 2018

Dr. Roberta Herman
Executive Director, Group Insurance Commission
19 Staniford Street
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Dr. Herman,

I am writing today to address the Group Insurance Commission's (GIC) vote to reduce - by half - the number of health insurance plan options currently available to its members. As the Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Public Health, a member of the GIC, and a representative of constituents that either rely on the GIC for their health insurance coverage or are employed by these Massachusetts based insurers, I am deeply concerned by the Commission's decision.

The decision by the GIC to eliminate coverage through Tufts Health Plan, Harvard Pilgrim, and Fallon Health, particularly without adequate notice or input from members, is troubling. With more than 440,000 Massachusetts residents - of all ages - relying on the GIC for coverage, this policy change has the potential to disrupt access to healthcare services, upset established patient-provider relationships, and even result in negative health outcomes. When individuals, many of whom have served the Commonwealth for decades, are forced to change the healthcare services they utilize, there exists the possibility for a gap in accessing services while these individuals work to identify new providers who can meet their unique needs. The GIC's decision stands in opposition to the precedent Massachusetts has set in being a leader in healthcare access and to the promises made to municipalities in 2007 when they joined the GIC expecting choice.

While failing to adequately notify or solicit input from the thousands of current and former employees of the Commonwealth who make up your membership, this decision was also made without the involvement of a vital GIC commissioner - a health economist. I am gravely concerned that the expertise of a health economist was not considered in a discussion focused specifically on potential financial savings. The GIC has estimated that this change will result in a savings of \$20.8 million in Fiscal Year 2019. I recognize and appreciate the need to create health care cost savings where possible, but at what point does access to reliable, uninterrupted health care for the Commonwealth's hardworking public servants take precedent? For a decision this far-reaching, it is imperative that all voices be heard to ensure that the GIC's actions prioritize the health and wellbeing of its membership.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. I strongly urge you to reverse your decision to eliminate these insurance options and allow the hundreds of thousands of residents of our Commonwealth depending on GIC coverage to have continuity and stability in their care. I would look forward to discussing this with you in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kate Hogan" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Kate Hogan
State Representative
Third Middlesex District