



February 10, 2021

Problems with Aetna Medicaid? You Can Change It

As of December 1, 2020, Aetna Better Health of Illinois (ABHIL) Medicaid recipients must use CVS pharmacies or a limited number of smaller independent pharmacies. Using Walgreens pharmacies is generally no longer an option for these recipients. Much of the West and South Sides of Chicago are pharmacy deserts. There are no CVS pharmacies in the Majority Black West Side communities of Humboldt Park, East Garfield Park, West Garfield Park, North Lawndale, or Austin.

Aetna says there is no problem with accessing pharmacies, and that they have not heard of any problems. Detailed investigation by pharmacy desert experts Drs. Dima Qato and Jenny Guadamuz, health equity expert Dr. David Ansell, and student Starmesha Prater, has revealed that there are indeed major pharmacy access issues on the West Side for persons who have Aetna Medicaid insurance. I have heard of many people who are having problems.

Limiting pharmacy options for Medicaid recipients affects people not only on the West and South Sides of Chicago, but people throughout Illinois. During this COVID-19 pandemic when people need their medications and the coronavirus vaccine at pharmacies, and when people are dying daily due to opioid overdoses, it makes no sense to limit access to pharmacies.

If you are having any problems with your Aetna Medicaid insurance, please call [1-866-329-4701](tel:1-866-329-4701) (TTY: 711) to complain. If you wish to change your insurance from Aetna to another managed care company, you still can do that until February 26, 2021. Aetna Better Health members who wish to change their plans can learn more about the health plan options, by going to www.EnrollHFS.illinois.gov. Click on "Compare Plans", then choose the county and scroll down. The list of Primary Care Providers is updated regularly. You can also call Client Enrollment Services at [1-877-912-8880](tel:1-877-912-8880) (TTY: 1-866-565-8576) for help comparing plans and choosing a different plan. I ask all health care providers to assist their patients with changing their plan if the patient would like help to make that change. Please ask your doctor for help.

Health care providers who want to register a complaint about Aetna or any managed care organization can use the Managed Care Provider Resolution Portal at <https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalProviders/cc/Pages/ManagedCareComplaints.aspx>

Aiming to increase pharmacy access, I have introduced [House Bill 0591](#) in the 102nd Illinois General Assembly to ensure greater access to pharmacy services for Illinois Medicaid recipients. Until that becomes law, you can change your insurance (until February 26, 2021) and make your complaints heard. Let's fight for better access to health care!

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District