



August 11, 2025

Mr. Thomas Fitzpatrick
Acting President
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware
Fifth Avenue Place
120 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-3099

Dear Mr. Fitzpatrick,

On behalf of Delaware's hospitals, healthcare facilities, physicians, public health professionals, and advance practice registered nurses, we are writing to respectfully request that Highmark Delaware restore its provider relations process to allow us to better serve our patients, your members.

More than a year ago, we became aware of a change in process that removed the traditional provider relations contacts at Highmark Delaware. Instead of having a single point person to help facilitate and expedite challenges with reimbursement for care, healthcare providers must now go through a time consuming and ineffective automated system, leading to an increase in delays.

Under the automated new system, providers must go through a "three attempts" process and must wait for 30 days before an issue is escalated further. Issues are not being resolved on the second or third escalation and it is taking longer to get issues resolved. Healthcare providers are frustrated that they cannot simply pick up the phone and speak to someone to get an issue resolved. Instead, they are having to divert additional time and resources away from patient care to go through the different levels of the new automated system in order to be reimbursed for the care they provide. This is unsustainable.

In addition, the challenges providers face with response times for Blue Card plans are not new, but the new process is adding an additional level of delay without the ability to call a provider relations representative to help expedite the process.

While we appreciate that Highmark is working on enhancements through the automated system to try and make improvements, healthcare providers need to be able to efficiently and effectively resolve issues so they may focus on their top priority of providing high-quality care for their Delaware patients. That is why we urge you to restore provider relations representatives immediately.

We have appreciated the collaboration with Highmark in recent years to ensure we are working together toward the same goal of serving Delaware patients and communities. We look forward to continuing to work together and thank you in advance for your assistance with this request.

Sincerely,

First State Health Leaders Alliance

Carolyn Petrak, Executive Director
Ability Network of Delaware

Kate Smith MD, MPH, Executive Director
Delaware Academy of Medicine – Delaware Public Health Association

Susan R. Getman, MA, Executive Director
Delaware Association for Home & Community Care

Brian Frazee, President & CEO
Delaware Healthcare Association

Cheryl Heiks, Executive Director
Delaware Health Care Facilities Association

Christopher E. Otto, MSN, RN, CCRN, Executive Director
Delaware Nurses Association

Kevin Musto, BSPHarm, FAPhA, DPEC Executive Director
Delaware Pharmacists Society

James W. McCracken, President & CEO
LeadingAge NJ & DE

Mark Thompson, Executive Director
Medical Society of Delaware