

**Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage,  
Insurance and Financial Services**

**Additional Written Comments**

(Submitted 5/12/22 by Kathie Summers-Grice on behalf of  
Health Action Network)

- Mary Small
- Diane Roberts
- Dwayne Bickford
- Dale Crafts
- Roy Grice

Mary E. Small  
980 Washington Street  
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votemyway@yahoo.com

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and honorable members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

Given the recent events regarding Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield and Maine Health, I am deeply concerned for the people of Maine who rely on both for their health care needs. My main concern is for the people that have doctors within the Maine Health network that encompasses almost all of southern Maine. Here in Bath, we are serviced by Mid-Coast Hospital that is now part of the Maine Health network. Many of these folks could end up having to choose between an insurance they have had for many years or a provider whom they like and trust unless the current dispute between Anthem and Maine Health is resolved before the end of the year. Maine has long grappled with both access to care and the cost of that care. Losing the largest insurer in the state's largest provider network will only exacerbate the problem.

As a former legislator and someone who spent their entire adult life in public service, I understand that resolving these types of disputes is both difficult and not a direct responsibility of the legislature. However, for the 24 years I served, access to health insurance and health care were always priorities of the legislature and it is in the best interest of the people of Maine and the providers to get both sides talking again and find a way to resolve this dispute.

I volunteer with a woman who has had several recent surgeries. She is distraught that she may not be allowed access to Maine Health hospitals and services because her husband's business uses Anthem. In addition, she told me her most recent bill for surgery had a charge for an overnight stay even though it was day surgery and there were several other charges for services she did not receive. If this is true, I can understand why there is a reluctance for Anthem to pay Maine Health. But I realize this is anecdotal which is why it is important for an independent mediator to get involved and figure out where the problems are and how best to correct them. I would suggest an out-of-state expert or someone with knowledge of the Maine system but independent from Maine government. Whatever the outcome, it needs to be beyond reproach by either side.

I hope you will work to ensure both sides are engaged and working to resolve this issue.

Sincerely,



Mary Small  
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Bath, Maine  
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Diane Roberts  
Sebago, ME  
dianeroberts12@yahoo.com

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and honorable members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

While Mainers struggle with increased costs on everyday goods and services, I am extremely concerned with the recent news regarding Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield and Maine Health and the potential impact that could have on health care costs. During a time when Mainers need reliable, accessible and affordable healthcare more than ever, losing the largest insurer in the state's largest provider network will only increase the need.

As a former billing specialist, I understand the true complexity of what needs to be negotiated, but it is imperative that Anthem and Maine Health put the Maine people first and stay at the negotiation table until resolved. Every day that passes a greater sense of fear and uncertainty rises with consumers across the State. This fear is unnecessary and one that will tax the healthcare system even further as patients try and schedule future procedures by the end of the year in case they are left without access in January.

I strongly urge Anthem and Maine Health to step up for the Maine people by coming to terms that end the dispute and do what is right for the patient.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Diane Roberts  
Sebago

Dwayne Bickford  
Capitol Partnerships  
Bickford.f.dwayne@gmail.com

May 11, 2022

The Honorable Heather Sanborn  
The Honorable Denise Tepler  
State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and member of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

I am writing to you today to share my grave concerns over the Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield and Maine Health dispute. As a small business owner of more than 15 years, I am always concerned with finding the right policy and coverage to fit our budget. Anthem has always provided options for covering families who don't have group insurance. Maine Health has provided exemplary service and care for Maine families.

However, with the recent news of Maine Health dropping Anthem as a provider has caused uncertainty and something small business owners and individual policy owners will need to worry about instead of focusing on building a successful business in Maine. It only makes sense that if you reduce providers and options the cost of the care will increase and access to care will decrease. That is what is happening with this most recent removal of Anthem from the in-network insurance network.

As a small business owner, it is crucial that my business partners work together and not carry their battles out in the public arena. I see opportunities for both sides to come together and resolve the issues without requiring Maine Health to remove Anthem from the in-network participating provider.

I am optimistic that cooler heads will prevail, that both parties will continue to communicate, and find a solution to this dispute. I would respectfully ask that the committee continue to monitor the situation and help to engage both parties to help them resolve their issues for all Mainers who now face the uncertain future of losing their insurer or their provider.

Thank you for your time,



Dwayne Bickford  
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207.798.9070

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Crafts Self Storage  
Lisbon, ME  
[craftsdale@gmail.com](mailto:craftsdale@gmail.com)

May 12, 2022

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Health Insurance Committee;

My name is Dale Crafts, and I am the owner of Crafts Self Storage located in Lisbon and Topsham. As a small business owner and former State Representative, I understand first hand the importance of ensuring our workforce has affordable health insurance, providing them access to quality care no matter where they live in Maine. The current dispute between Maine Health and Anthem has created great uncertainty for both employers and employees.

Maine employees deserve to have good and affordable health insurance and access to Maine's best providers for themselves and their families. Healthy employees are what drive the Maine economy, and Anthem and Maine Health have both played a vital role for many years in keeping Mainers on the job.

If Anthem and Maine Health do not work toward a solution immediately, the level of uncertainty and fear will only grow for both employers trying to provide quality insurance to their employees and employees who would be left with limited options for their families health.

I strongly encourage Maine Health and Anthem to sit back down at the table and find an agreement that protects the Maine consumer and their employers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale Crafts", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dale Crafts

Roy Grice  
Cumberland  
roymagictouch@gmail.com

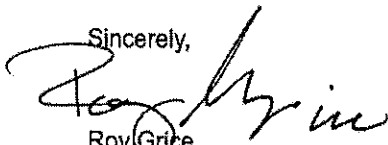
Members of the Health Insurance Committee,

The recent news of the Anthem and Maine Health dispute has me concerned for the quality care I may receive if Anthem is no longer accepted at Maine Health facilities. This past January I had by-pass surgery at Maine Medical. I was extremely happy with both my surgeon and the quality of care received by the facility. Likewise, I have been extremely happy with the quality of my Anthem Medicare Supplement plan for the last 10 years.

When I heard of the news I immediately, and rightly came to the conclusion this will force me to choose between the insurer I know and like and the providers who saved my life in January. To me, the choice seems absurd in this day and age, in the most advanced Nation in the world. I would ask the Legislature to please use whatever means possible to help facilitate an agreement between the two sides. Without an agreement, I will be left with an impossible choice that either way will diminish the quality of care I receive in the future.

I know I am likely one of thousands of seniors in Maine faced with the same dilemma. I also know that while this disagreement is largely focused on billing and payments, in the end healthcare is about saving people's lives. My life was saved by both in January, I am hoping that you all can find the means to ensure all Mainers have the ability to receive the best care possible, by doctors they trust and insurers they know will be there when the need arises.

Sincerely,



Roy Grice  
Cumberland