

July 26, 2018

Mr. David Holmberg
President and Chief Executive Officer
Highmark
Fifth Avenue Place
120th Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Dear Mr. Holmberg:

As the 2019 rate filing process gets underway, I am writing to express my continued concerns about the ongoing Republican effort to dismantle our healthcare system and the threat it poses to West Virginia's marketplace. I am most concerned about the impacts recent policy changes and ongoing uncertainties will have on the people of West Virginia and the premiums they will be forced to pay next year.

Last year, West Virginians were hit with double digit rate increases, increasing West Virginians' premiums by \$71 per month. In December, Congressional Republicans passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which, among other things, repealed a fundamental healthcare provision without any replacement. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated this change will increase the number of uninsured Americans by 13 million and raise health insurance premiums by 10 percent. In West Virginia alone, premiums are projected to increase by \$1,400 by the end of the year.

That's why I wrote to Commissioner McVey last month and urged him to do what he could to limit these price increases, protect choices, and maintain consumer protections in the individual and small group markets. Today, I am seeking your help in better understanding the factors driving these cost increases, specifically:

1. What are the factors contributing to your decision on where to participate in the individual marketplace and what factors are you examining to set your rates?
2. How will the healthcare provisions included in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act impact rates and market stability in West Virginia?
3. What impact would the proposed rule on short-term, limited-duration insurance have on rates and market stability in West Virginia?
4. What has been the cumulative effect of repeated efforts to undermine Affordable Care Act through congressional and administrative actions?
5. Does the Administration have any additional tools at its disposal to stabilize the markets?
6. What impact could *Texas et al. v. United States et al.* have on rates for the 800,000 West Virginians if the courts find in favor of the Attorneys General arguing that pre-existing condition protections should be repealed?

Since I came to the Senate, I have tried to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for years to fix these issues. After the failed repeal effort last year, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle came together to fix these issues in a bipartisan way. Today there are two bipartisan compromises, which I support, one led by Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Patty Murray (D-WA) and another one led by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Bill Nelson (D-FL). These bills include important steps that will help reduce healthcare costs for West Virginia families, and this agreement shows what is possible when we put people before politics.

West Virginians expect their elected officials to work together on lowering rates and stabilizing the market, and I stand ready and willing to work with all my colleagues - Republicans and Democrats – to do just that. I have been and will continue to be open to ideas that will make healthcare more affordable and expand coverage options. I look forward to continuing to work with you and to your response.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator