



901 Montgomery Street, Decorah, IA 52101 [www.winmedical.org](http://www.winmedical.org)

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***Letter to the Editor***

**Medicaid changes in Iowa**

As many people know, the state of Iowa plans to privatize Medicaid beginning on January 1, 2016. Medicaid provides health care coverage for about 560,000 low-income or disabled people in Iowa. The beneficiaries of Medicaid are often children and senior citizens. Medicaid is a \$4.2 billion program in Iowa that receives 55 percent of its funding from the federal government and 45 percent from the state. Medicaid's transition to a managed care model represents a significant shift in Iowa's health care delivery system. Iowa is one of only a few states that have moved forward with a proposal to move virtually 100 percent of its Medicaid population into managed care. According to the governor's program, privatizing Medicaid will improve quality and access, promote accountability for outcomes and create a more predictable and sustainable Medicaid budget.

The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) has selected four, for-profit, Managed Care Organizations (MCO) to administer the \$4.2 billion Medicaid system in Iowa. They are: AmeriHealth Caritas, Amerigroup Iowa, United Healthcare Plan of the River Valley and WellCare Iowa. These four companies are working to secure contracts with local health care providers. Medicaid patients should have received a packet in the mail to sign up for their choice of a MCO. The deadline for patients to sign up is December 17, 2015. If a patient misses this deadline, Iowa DHS will randomly assign to patients one of the four MCOs. Signing up for a MCO has been difficult because many providers (physicians and hospitals) have not yet contracted with the MCOs due to lack of information and details on coverage for clients and intended reimbursement rates.

Winneshiek Medical Center has been dutifully following the changes in the Iowa Medicaid program and the contracts offered by the four MCOs. As of today, Winneshiek Medical Center has signed a contract with United Healthcare, one of the four MCOs the state has chosen. Other contracts with the three remaining MCOs are still under review and it is possible that the medical center may sign additional contracts, but only after receiving full disclosure and understanding of the payment terms and conditions. Further information on MCO contract participation by Winneshiek Medical Center is available on the website [www.winmedical.org](http://www.winmedical.org).

Patients need to know that effective January 1, 2016, Medicaid patients registering for services at Winneshiek Medical Center will need to bring two insurance cards with them—their Iowa Medicaid card and their new insurance card from the managed care organization they enrolled with.

Iowa Medicaid changes have been moving at a rapid pace. It is understandable that patients may have questions. Patients with questions about the Iowa MCOs or the coverage of their healthcare services should call Iowa Medicaid Member Services at 1-800-338-8366. People who have questions regarding which managed care organizations Winneshiek Medical Center will be contracting with, should call WMC Patient Financial Services at 563-382-2911 and ask to speak with a financial counselor.

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