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Contact: John Hoffman, john.k.hoffman@illinois.gov

Telephone: (312) 793-4971

TTY: (800) 526-5812

HealthChoice Illinois launches January 1, focusing on whole-person health State and health plans committed to advancing quality outcomes

SPRINGFIELD -- With an emphasis on whole-person care, HealthChoice Illinois – the state’s rebooted Medicaid managed care program – launches on January 1, 2018 to serve almost 2.7 million residents. To make sure they understand their opportunities in the program, those becoming part of HealthChoice Illinois are being contacted individually based on when they will be joining.

“HealthChoice Illinois will bring quality healthcare for those with limited resources while ensuring sustainable costs for taxpayers,” said Felicia Norwood, Director of Healthcare and Family Services, which oversees the program. “By fostering smart health decisions, we strengthen the entire program, and everyone benefits.”

Under the managed care program reboot, seven plans have committed to providing care for 80 percent of all Medicaid beneficiaries statewide. The current managed care program was designed to operate in only 30 counties and fails to reach people in the most rural areas of Illinois. HFS will oversee the statewide program, partnering with the health plans to ensure care is provided and monitoring progress.

The state announced the managed care reboot in February, with a competitive bidding process used to select the plans. The new program streamlines administration, includes tools to measure and promote success and incorporates a coordinated care system that addresses the total health history and needs of each member.

Members will be able to select the plan that best suit their needs. The plans are:

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois (statewide)
- CountyCare (operating in Cook County only)
- Harmony Health Plan (statewide)
- IlliniCare Health Plan, which will also serve children under the care of DCFS
- Meridian Health (statewide)
- Molina Healthcare (statewide)
- NextLevel Health (operating in Cook County only)

As part of HealthChoice Illinois, the Department and plans will also partner on awareness initiatives that encourage smart healthcare choices. Pooling resources, they will speak with a common voice to foster medical provider participation, coordinated care, prevention, early treatment of chronic conditions and other strategies that help people lead healthier lives.

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HealthChoice Illinois: Key Facts

- HealthChoice Illinois includes seven managed care plans, a reduction from 12. The reduction will lead to benefits of scale, including less overhead and more efficient administration.
- HealthChoice Illinois streamlines procedures to better serve the needs of patients and providers, establishes vital guidelines for better whole-person care coordination, quality measures and access, and emphasizes prevention and managing chronic illnesses to reduce costly and dangerous complications. HFS will measure how successfully plans are treating member conditions and will work with them to improve outcomes.
- The purchase-of-care process used to choose the plans mirrored traditional procurements, including key components such as its soundness of evaluations, transparent communications and the use of objective measures.
- The portion of Medicaid beneficiaries in managed care will increase from about 63% to more than 80%, a total of about 2.7 million.
- Members in counties with Medicaid managed care programs today are transitioning to the new HealthChoice program on January 1, 2018. Anyone currently enrolled with a health plan that was also chosen for HealthChoice Illinois can remain with their current plan, unless they choose to switch to a new plan during a 90-day switch period. This means nearly 1.5 million people will not have to experience a plan change.
- Beneficiaries in counties currently not part of the managed care program will join HealthChoice Illinois starting April 1, 2018. HealthChoice Illinois education and enrollment packets will begin to be mailed in early 2018. The packets will provide each individual with information on their plan choices, timeframe for making a plan choice and how to get more information or assistance with making a plan choice.

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