

## **Update on State Health Benefit Plan Options By Margaret Ciccarelli on May 30, 2008**

Representatives from the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) announced a new process for vendor procurement under the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP). After determining which vendors could best accommodate SHBP members, Cigna Healthcare and United Healthcare were identified.

SHBP is slated to conduct member outreach and education on plan options prior to and during the Open Enrollment period. Open Enrollment for the new plans will run October 10, 2008 – November 10, 2008. Members with questions should call the SHBP Call Center at 1-800-610-1863.

PAGE will provide more information if it becomes available. Please see the following DCH press release and Atlanta Journal-Constitution item.

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 22, 2008

### **Georgia Expands Health Care Options Statewide**

*State Health Benefit Plan Advances Health Benefits Transformation and Consumerism*

ATLANTA – The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) announced the completion of the competitive procurement for the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) health insurance plan options. CIGNA HealthCare and United Healthcare were awarded statewide contracts to provide health care coverage to Georgia's state employees. The new health plan contracts will be effective January 1, 2009.

"Innovation in health care ensures new choices and opportunities to improve the health and well being of our members," said Dr. Rhonda Medows, Commissioner, DCH. "Both CIGNA and United Healthcare demonstrated established, comprehensive, statewide provider access for our 700,000 members as well as offering our members access to innovative wellness programs and leading-edge disease state management programs."

SHBP members statewide will have access to an expanded provider network and will have the choice of enrolling in any of the following plan options offered by both CIGNA and United Healthcare: Health Reimbursement Account (HRA), High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP), Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) or Medicare Advantage Private Fee-for-Service Plan.

“The consolidation from three to two health care vendors is part of SHBP’s transformation strategy that focuses on enhanced provider access statewide, consumerism, administrative effectiveness and year-over-year financial savings,” said Nancy Goldstein, Director, SHBP. “Over the past year SHBP shared our strategic plan with a wide audience of stakeholders, including members of the General Assembly, SHBP members, state agencies, school districts, retirees and the general public. We are confident that this plan to transform SHBP will deliver enhanced choice and services while keeping health care affordable for our members. ”

SHBP will conduct intensive member outreach and education on members’ plan options prior to and during the state’s Open Enrollment. Open Enrollment for the new plans will run October 10, 2008 – November 10, 2008. Members with questions should call the SHBP Call Center at 1-800-610-1863.

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## **State to reduce health insurance providers for employees**

Georgia currently covers about 700,000 via Kaiser, CIGNA, United Healthcare

By [BILL HENDRICK](#)  
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution  
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Nearly 700,000 teachers and other state employees, their dependants and retirees will have to decide by fall whether to switch insurance companies after the state Department of Community Health announced Thursday it was reducing the number of insurers from three to two.

Currently, members have the option of enrolling with BlueCross BlueShield, Kaiser or United Healthcare, said Community Health spokeswoman Lisa Marie Shekell. This fall, members, including legislators, will have to decide between United Healthcare and CIGNA.

Shekell said most State Health Benefit Plan members, 471,980 or 68 percent out of 692,759 total, are enrolled with United Healthcare. The state did not break out membership for the other two plans.

She said all state employees currently enrolled with United Healthcare can remain with the provider or make a switch but will still have many options. Open enrollment extends from Oct. 10 to Nov. 10.

Current Kaiser enrollees can stay in Kaiser for one additional year if they so choose, she said, or can go with CIGNA or United Healthcare.

The state said it had completed a competitive procurement process for the contracts. New health plan contracts will be effective Jan. 1, 2009.

"The health insurance company is what is changing," Shekell said. "CIGNA and United Healthcare had to meet certain criterion the State Health Benefit Plan was looking for."

She said 97 percent of Blue Cross Blue Shield members will be able to go to the same doctors under United Healthcare or CIGNA plans.

"Innovation in health care ensures new choices and opportunities to improve the health and well-being of our members," Dr. Rhonda Medows, commissioner of DCH, said in a prepared statement. "Both CIGNA and United Healthcare demonstrated established, comprehensive, statewide provider access for our 700,000 members as well as offering our members access to innovative wellness programs and leading-edge disease state management programs."

Nancy Goldstein, director of the State Health Benefit Plan, said in a statement that state officials are "confident that this plan to transform SHBP will deliver enhanced choice and services while keeping health care affordable for our members."

The state said in a statement that it will offer "intensive member outreach and education" on options and choices before the open enrollment period starts. Members with questions were urged to phone the SHBP call center at 1-800-610-1863.