



# UHCAN Ohio Calls on ODI to Hold Hearings on Health Insurance Companies' Mergers

February 15, 2016

Steve Wagner, executive director of UHCAN Ohio, last week called on the Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) to hold hearings on the two proposed mergers of health insurance companies, Cigna with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield and Aetna with Humana.

Joined by consumer groups and unions, UHCAN said in a letter, "Our concern is for the millions of Ohioans currently insured by these companies and the potential impact the mergers would have on the affordability of coverage in Ohio's insurance market. Ohio already faces some of the highest health insurance premiums in the country. One of the major culprits of Ohio's high premiums is the lack of competition among insurers and these mergers will only make matters worse."

Wagner went on urge Lt. Gov. and ODI Director Mary Taylor "to hold a public hearing on each merger to thoroughly explore and evaluate the impacts these mergers could have on Ohio consumers, particularly in the Medicare Advantage market. We believe ensuring and increasing competition within Ohio's health insurance market is critical to improving care, lowering costs, and providing access to providers and benefits for all Ohioans."

The 13-page letter to Taylor, which can be found on the Hannah News homepage at [www.hannah.com](http://www.hannah.com) >Important New Documents>Library, makes the following assertions:

- The mergers of Anthem-Cigna and Aetna-Humana will have a significant impact on Ohio health insurance markets.
- The mergers are likely to result in higher consumer costs throughout Ohio.
- There are significant concerns over network adequacy.
- New entry will not prevent competitive harm.
- Health insurance merger efficiencies are unlikely to outweigh the competitive harm.

Besides UHCAN Ohio, the letter was signed by the Consumers Union, U.S. PIRG, Consumer Federation of America, Consumer Watchdog, Consumer Action, AFSCME District Council 27, and the Sergeants Benevolent Association.

Because of the Presidents' Day state holiday on Monday, there was no one available at ODI to respond to queries from Hannah News about this request.