



Commissioner Donna Lee H. Williams

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**INSURANCE COMMISSIONER EXPRESSES CONCERNS FOR
DELAWARE CONSUMERS AS A RESULT OF PROPOSED
MARYLAND LEGISLATION REGARDING CAREFIRST**

DOVER, DE – Insurance Commissioner Donna Lee H. Williams announced today that, in light of the decision by the Maryland Insurance Commissioner, Steven B. Larsen, to disapprove the proposed sale of the non-profit Blue Cross Blue Shield insurer, CareFirst, Inc. (“CareFirst”), to WellPoint Health Networks, Inc. (“WellPoint”), a for profit corporation, she is reviewing the status of the pending application in Delaware to assure that the interests of the citizens of Delaware are fully protected. WellPoint has filed for approval of the CareFirst sale in Delaware, Maryland and the District of Columbia. Commissioner Williams has granted a thirty-day suspension of her examinations at WellPoint’s request so that WellPoint can decide if it wants to appeal the Maryland decision.

Last week, a bill was introduced into the Maryland House of Delegates that will, if passed in its current form, substantially alter the status of CareFirst and its Board of Directors. Commissioner Williams said that, “Under Delaware law and the Affiliation Order of March 20, 2000, CareFirst and BCBSD must obtain my approval before any changes are made to their charters, by-laws or governing structures.” She also said that she will not permit any change to the Board structure of CareFirst that would diminish Delaware’s representation on the CareFirst Board or otherwise violate the conditions of the Affiliation Order or Delaware law.

In addition, the Department is reviewing Commissioner Larsen’s order and the proposed Maryland legislation to determine their impact on BCBSD’s obligations to its Delaware subscribers.

Commissioner Williams has primary regulatory authority over BCBSD. She has the authority to withdraw her approval of the affiliation if BCBSD and CareFirst do not follow the conditions set forth in the Affiliation Order or if the interests of Delaware’s subscribers are adversely affected. Commissioner Williams said, “I will take all action necessary to protect the interests of Delawareans against any negative or adverse effects of the Maryland Commissioner’s Order or the proposed legislation in Maryland.”

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