



Staff Human Resources Item 1

ERIE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

July 8, 2024

TO: Chairman Jerry Schad, Vice Chair Peggy LaGree and Treasurer Michele Iannello

FROM: Jennifer Hibit, Director of Human Resources

SUBJECT: **LMHF – Labor Management Healthcare Fund – Changes to Health Insurance Medical Carrier**

Hello Commissioners,

This memo is to alert you to the changes that are coming to our health insurance medical carrier through the Labor Management Health Care Fund (LMHF).

LMHF's medical carrier transitioned from BlueCross BlueShield to Highmark almost two years ago when the latter acquired the former. Since this time, there were numerous challenges with Highmark, including billing issues, providing incorrect information to covered individuals, personnel changes, and poor communication.

This year, LMHF issued a Request for Proposal for the group Health Insurance. Three companies bid on the LMHF book of business which covers over 23,000 members, including Erie County, ECMC, many school districts, other municipalities and the Erie County Water Authority.

After much discussion and review of the current provider, a vote was taken by the LMHF Board of Directors to move from Highmark to Univera HealthCare. This transition has already begun but the official change in carrier will happen January 1, 2025.

Univera is very excited to take on the LMHF and is offering many services to ease the transition. Univera has a strong network covering over 99% of physicians across 39 upstate counties and 100% of hospitals and physician groups so there should be very minimal provider disruption. There are NO changes to our benefits.

The Human Resources Department along with the Finance Department will be working with LMHF and Univera to ensure our employees understand the process and get all their questions answered and ensure payment and billing issues are addressed.

If you have any questions on these trainings or anything else, please contact Jennifer Hibit or Jessica Brown.

Thank you.