

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

Submit Time: 8/11/2023 2:21:51 PM

Name: Todd Kummer

Affiliation: Vermont Open MRI

Town/City: South Burlington

Topic: Hospital Budget

Comment: As you continue to consider the increases requested by the Vermont hospitals, please keep the impact of these increases on Vermont businesses and our employees front of mind. BCBSVT indicated in its most recent rate filing that 2/3 of its increase is the result of increased hospital costs. Vermont businesses and their employees cannot continue to bare these costs, particularly, if they continue to increase so rapidly. Vermont Open MRI has a unique vantage point to witness these changes. As a provider it is maddening to know that both MVP and BCBS VT are currently paying less for our services than we had contracted for over ten years ago. Let that sink in, our current reimbursements are LESS than they were 10 years ago. At the same time, our health insurance premiums compared to 10 years ago have more than doubled. As a health care provider with lower reimbursements and higher costs, we have been forced to become creative throughout our organization to continually lower costs and improve efficiency in order to stay in business. Additionally, we are providing identical services as those provided by surrounding hospitals for approximately 25% of what they are charging. We are saving Vermonters \$2000, \$3000 sometimes more than \$5000 on their MRIs. Why is it the smaller providers, who are providing services for dramatically lower costs, are forced to bare the higher costs that are a consequence of the profligate spending of our competitors? Our reimbursements are reduced by Medicare and Medicaid by 2% every year and have been since the Affordable Care Act was first past and our costs continue to go up. The commercial insurers have similarly reduced our reimbursements while enjoying premium increases of over 10% per year over the last four or five years! Hospitals can no longer be shielded from economic reality. This is crazy and leads to unsustainability. These escalating costs prevent us from reinvesting in our business - impeding our ability to grow and increase our workforce. We've struggled to hang on this long by examining every opportunity to reduce costs and administrative overhead – continually adjusting to the changing landscape of our market. We have been committed to this because we value our employees and know how important health insurance is to their financial security and peace of mind and the value of our services to the community at large. We respectfully request that the GMCB exercise its full authority to limit any increase in hospital costs and health insurance premiums. Short of doing that job, perhaps you could recommend the government payers do their part and actually raise their reimbursement rates to reflect the real cost of providing services. And if unable to fulfill any of those statutory mandates, perhaps you could resign and allow new member to be appointed that would.

Post Comment: Yes