

October 1, 2024

To Our Valued Patients,

We want to update you on the discussions we've been having with Excellus Health Plan (Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Central New York). As you know, we notified Excellus of our intention to terminate our professional provider agreement on December 31, 2024. We did this in June, well in advance of our 90-day notice requirement – which would have been today -- to give our patients time to prepare. At the time, Excellus shrugged off the notification, telling the community that there was still plenty of time to make a deal. Unfortunately, we must report that we have not seen any meaningful progress on the part of Excellus to address the issues we have been bringing to their attention for more than a year.

At this stage, while we continue to work towards achieving a new contract, we do not have confidence that we will reach an agreement with Excellus. Many employers are making decisions this month on which plans to offer their staff and they will not know which providers are in network. Barring last minute resolutions to negotiations with FamilyCare Medical Group and other healthcare providers, the Excellus network may shrink heading into 2025.

As the largest primary care practice in Central New York, FamilyCare Medical Group's focused mission is providing quality care to our communities. Excellus has not lived up to its commitment to support the clinical programs that lead to strong patient outcomes. It is a partnership that has proven effective with other insurance providers and is critical to ensuring we can achieve our quality care mission. We are committed to our patients and feel an obligation to keep you informed of issues that may influence our ability to continue to provide outstanding healthcare. Based on the lack of progress from Excellus, there is a growing likelihood that FamilyCare Medical Group will no longer be an in network provider with Excellus at the start of 2025.

As you likely know, at the end of last year WellNow Urgent Care ended its provider agreement with Excellus after negotiations with the insurance provider failed. You may have also heard that St. Joseph's Health has told its patients that it has notified Excellus it plans to terminate its provider agreement with Excellus at the end of this year. Excellus wants you to believe that keeping our patients informed is nothing more than a negotiating tactic on the part of FamilyCare Medical Group. The truth is that our concerns about Excellus and its willingness to collaborate to provide quality care are shared by other healthcare providers across Central New York.

What can you do? We will continue to advocate on your behalf. In the meantime, you can prepare:

- **Explore other coverage options.** FamilyCare Medical Group will remain in-network in 2025 with several other insurance providers including MVP Health Care, Humana, Aetna and United Healthcare. We encourage you to review your insurance plan options and consider switching to a carrier that allows you to stay with us. Call us and we can help you understand your options.
- **Talk to your employer.** As you read this your benefits manager and human resource staff are actively working to select an insurance plan. You have a voice in this process. Talk to

them about making sure they offer insurance plans that have FamilyCare Medical Group as an in network provider. This will protect you from the potential of higher out of network charges and the difficulty in finding an alternative primary care physician.

- **Contact your broker.** Patients with a Medicare Advantage plan administered by Excellus may consider alternative coverage options during the annual open enrollment period from Oct. 15-Dec. 7, 2024.
- **Contact Medicare.** Dually-enrolled patients in Medicare/Medicaid may have options to make a change in your plan. Call 800-633-4227 to see if you are eligible.
- **Contact New York State.** If you are covered by an Excellus Medicaid plan you can consider alternative coverage options. To learn about affordable options call 800-541-2831 or visit www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/members.
- **Call Excellus.** It is every patient's right to call their insurance provider and ask why their primary care provider may no longer be in network. At FamilyCare Medical Group we believe that care and patient outcomes are a shared responsibility between a provider and insurer. Call Excellus at 877-883-9577 and ask them to explain why their provider network is shrinking.
- **Consider the impact on your care plan.** Your health and well-being are our primary concern. We sincerely hope you'll stay with FamilyCare Medical Group. If you decide to switch to another provider, we understand. We will help you through your transition and ensure your medical records are securely transferred to your new provider. If you have any appointments or procedures scheduled for early 2025, please contact us about possibly rescheduling those before the end of this year.

We understand that termination of the Excellus contract could have a significant impact on about a third of our patients who are part of employer, Medicare or Medicaid plans offered by Excellus. This potential shift also has implications for our physicians and staff. We would have preferred to have concluded negotiations with Excellus by now, but they are playing the same delaying games that they used three years ago. Since that time, they have not lived up to promises they made to us and have opted to stall important conversations about the value based care our patients count on.

We value the relationships we have with you and your family. We respect the trust you place in FamilyCare Medical Group. We deeply regret any inconvenience this change may cause and we will continue to advocate on your behalf.

With best wishes for your health,



Mitchell Brodey, MD
President and Chief Executive Officer
FamilyCare Medical Group