



SUFFOLK COUNTY
EMHP
Employee Medical Health Plan of Suffolk County

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DRAFT

Dear EMHP Participant:

Empire BlueCross BlueShield is currently in negotiations with East End Health Alliance for a new multiyear agreement effective August 1, 2009. East End Health Alliance was established by **Eastern Long Island Hospital, Peconic Bay Medical Center and Southampton Hospital** so we will refer to these hospitals collectively as “EEHA” in this letter.

Contract negotiations with participating providers are a standard part of what our Third Party Administrators do every day to bring you access to a broad network of providers. Empire BlueCross BlueShield and EEHA have a long history of partnership and we recognize the importance of these hospitals to you and your family.

The reason Empire BlueCross BlueShield negotiates provider contracts is simple – to provide you with a broad network of providers who have agreed to accept negotiated rates and other important contract terms. This makes premiums and overall costs more affordable to EMHP. Almost half of EMHP costs are hospital costs. Any unreasonable increase can impact both the overall cost of insurance to EMHP, and it could eventually increase your out-of-pocket costs.

We are informing you of this negotiation because EEHA’s contract with Empire BlueCross BlueShield is scheduled to terminate effective August 1, 2009. .

Please note if an agreement is not reached with EEHA by August 1, 2009, your relationship with a physician with *exclusive admitting privileges at EEHA facilities (Eastern Long Island Hospital, Peconic Bay Medical Center and Southampton Hospital) may be impacted.*

Again, we wish to assure you that Empire BlueCross BlueShield is working diligently, and in good faith, to reach a reasonable agreement with EEHA on your behalf before August 1, 2009.

Please visit the website at:

www.empireblue.com/EMHP for important updates on these hospital negotiations.

Please contact Medical Management or Member Services at Empire BlueCross Blue Shield at 1(800) 939-7515 if you need any assistance with any upcoming elective surgeries or visits that you have scheduled at the above mentioned facilities or you may call Empire BlueCross BlueShield’s dedicated call line to be available to provide you with additional details at: 1(800) 495-9323 Monday through Sunday from 7:00 a.m. through 8:00 p.m. (EST).

They are there to assist you in finding a provider or facility that convenient for you and/or your family.

Please see the enclosed geographical alternatives, as well as some frequently asked questions in regard to this hospital negotiation and how it affects you.



**QUESTIONS THAT MAY ARISE IF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS
 ARE NOT COMPLETED BY AUGUST 1, 2009**

*If an agreement is not reached before August 1 2009, will I be covered if I receive emergency care services at EEHA?
 Yes. In all instances, emergency services at any appropriate facility or hospital, including EEHA will continue to be covered in accordance with member benefit contracts and governing state and federal laws. It is also important to understand that there will be no immediate interruption of care that is already underway at EEHA.*

*What if I am scheduled for a procedure or need to seek care at EEHA before August 1, 2009?
You will continue to have access to EEHA through August 1, 2009. Empire will provide you with further notice and details if we believe an agreement with EEHA is unlikely before August 1, 2009. It is important to again note that emergency services will continue to be covered on an in-network basis.*

*What if I am scheduled for a procedure at EEHA after August 1, 2009?
 Except for maternity care services and transitional care services, as described below, for any surgeries or procedures that you may have scheduled at EEHA after August 1, 2009, unless authorized in advance by Empire BlueCross BlueShield, it will be necessary for your provider to relocate those surgeries or procedures to another hospital or facility that participates with Empire, or refer you to another provider who can render the care at a hospital or facility that participates with Empire BlueCross BlueShield. This will ensure that those services are covered at the highest possible level of benefit.*

*What if I am pregnant, can I receive maternity care services at EEHA?
 Yes. If you are in your second or third trimester of pregnancy as of August 1, 2009, you will continue to be covered through the delivery of your child and post-partum care directly related to the delivery, so long as EEHA agrees to continue to render services under the same terms as those specified under the most recent agreement between EEHA and Empire BlueCross BlueShield.*

*What if I am not pregnant and I am currently receiving services at EEHA as of August 1, 2009, will my care be interrupted?
No. If you are currently receiving services at EEHA and you are in an ongoing course of treatment, you may continue to receive services at EEHA during a transitional period of up to 90 days ending on October 29, 2009. Approval of services during this transitional period is conditioned upon EEHA's agreement to provide services according to the terms of the most recent agreement between EEHA and Empire BlueCross BlueShield.*

If an agreement cannot be reached, Empire BlueCross BlueShield will work closely with you to ensure your future care is not compromised. Towards this end, we want to assure you that you will continue to enjoy access to a large list of nearby hospitals. For your own reference, following is a list of alternate area hospitals currently in our network:

Alternate Hospitals	Town
Brookhaven Memorial Hospital	Patchogue
Good Samaritan Hospital	West Islip
Huntington Hospital	Huntington
John T. Mather Memorial Hospital	Port Jefferson
Southside Hospital	Bay Shore
St. Catherine of Siena Hospital	Smithtown
St. Charles Hospital & Rehabilitation Center	Port Jefferson