



New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store, and Automotive Association (**NJGCA**)
(Formerly New Jersey Gasoline Retailers Association)
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Value Based Care The Kind Of Choice NJ Small Businesses Need

Rising health care costs have been suffocating small businesses in New Jersey for decades. These businesses, which are the backbone of our local economies, struggle every day to pay for escalating premiums. Our state has continued to operate under a system that encourages, rather than tries to end, these rising costs. Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey is fighting to end these failed practices through their new OMNIA health care plans. The state should be encouraging more of this innovation.

The New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store, Automotive Association (NJGCA) represents over 1,500 small business owners who serve the motoring public. For over 75 years, our members keep people in New Jersey on the go, whether it be through automotive repair, fuel, or even your morning cup of coffee. We are proud of the services our members provide, and even prouder to call New Jersey our home.

Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more difficult for our members to keep calling New Jersey home. The state currently operates under a “fee-for-service” model on health care. Under this system, doctors are incentivized not for keeping people healthy, but for bringing in more patients and conducting more tests. This system has failed to be productive. Its focus on process rather than outcomes has resulted in skyrocketing premiums for years. Consumers and small businesses have suffered the consequences.

Horizon, and other health insurers, have sought to change that. Their recently introduced OMNIA health plans put the focus on consumer well being. These kinds of plans, known as value based care, encourage collaboration between patients, doctors, and health insurers to determine what is in the best interests of the patient. This means fewer unnecessary tests and fewer unnecessary trips to the doctor's office. As a result, premiums are lowered for the consumer and for small businesses. It is exactly the kind of system our members need and have been looking for.

OMNIA and value based care isn't just about lowering premiums for businesses and consumers. It is about offering more options. One of the most discouraging elements of New Jersey's current system isn't just that it is wasteful, but that it has left our members few choices when it comes to health care. If OMNIA is not right for an individual or a business, they do not have to choose it. But they should at least have the option available to them.

NJGCA is so concerned about the costs of health coverage we have long ago formed a self funded trust with other small business associations called Association Master Trust (AMT). Although AMT pays medical claims for our members, we partner with Horizon to administer our claims payment process and to allow our members access to their network of providers. NJGCA welcomes Horizon's new OMNIA plans as it will lower costs for our members.

Instead of embracing new plans that offer lower premiums and more choice, we have seen elected representatives try to step in and halt OMNIA. This is not what is best for our state. In fact, attempts to maintain the status quo only serve to put greater strain on small businesses already struggling to pay their health care costs. If the government wishes to help, it should be encouraging this kind of innovation, not trying to stop it.

Value based care is where New Jersey must head when it comes to health care. We cannot allow the current structure to continue to stunt the growth of our small businesses. Horizon is attempting to fix that trend through its OMNIA health plans. On behalf of the 1,500 members we represent, I ask that the state of New Jersey get on board as well.

Sal Risalvato

Sal Risalvato is Executive Director of The New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store, Automotive Association (NJGCA) representing small businesses in the motor fuel, convenience store, and auto repair industries for over 75 years.

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