



A Response to Misconceptions Regarding SouthCoast Medical Group's Participation with BlueCross BlueShield of Georgia

It is with great reluctance that SouthCoast Medical Group has made the decision to publically air some of the concerns we have with BlueCross BlueShield of Georgia (BCBSGa). We had hoped to resolve our issues privately. However, now that more than 15,000 patients have been told by BCBSGa to end their relationship with their adult or pediatric primary care physicians, SouthCoast sees no other option but to respond publically. And even though we feel like David before his fight with Goliath, our group of local physicians feels compelled to stand up against one of the largest companies in America so that our patients and our community know the facts.

On March 11, 2009, BCBSGa sent letters to our BCBSGa patients. These letters contained several points we consider factually incorrect or misleading in order to paint your physician in a negative light. As a result, we want to provide you with additional information and documentation so that you can reach your own conclusion. Copies of all supporting documents can be found on our website at www.southcoastmedical.com/bcbsinfo.

What the letters stated: "BCBSGa has been unable to reach Agreement with (physician's name) to renew our HMO and PPO contracts."

SouthCoast's response: **On December 19, 2008, BCBSGa elected to terminate our physician contracts rather than allowing them to automatically renew on January 1, 2009.**

What the letters stated: "We (BCBSGa) have been working diligently over the last year to reach a mutually beneficial contractual relationship."

SouthCoast's response: **In June 2008, almost a full year in advance of the contract expiration date (May 1, 2009), SouthCoast Medical Group submitted a proposal to BCBSGa. BCBSGa has never responded to that proposal.**

What the letters stated: "(Y)ou will need to select a new Primary Care Physician (PCP) by April 11, 2009." "(Y)ou may be available for continuity of care benefits...provided there are clinical reasons to prevent the direct transfer to a new physician."

SouthCoast's response: **All patients have a right to see their current SouthCoast PCP until May 1, 2009 and their current SouthCoast specialist physician until July 1, 2009.**

All patients with "chronic illness" "have the right to continue to receive health care services" from their current SouthCoast PCP until June 29, 2009 and from their current SouthCoast specialist until August 29, 2009. A chronic illness is one lasting three or more months, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, ADHD and asthma, just to name a few.

The SouthCoast Medical Group physicians want their patients and community to know they are willing to continue their participation with BCBSGa if such participation will allow them to maintain their mission to provide "compassionate, quality, cost-conscious healthcare."

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