

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 12, 2023

Bryan Palmer
CEO of Employer & Individual Health Plans of Georgia and Alabama
UnitedHealthcare

Dear Mr. Palmer,

In light of the recent expiration of the contract between UnitedHealthcare and Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS), I write to encourage any action necessary to reach an agreement with NGHS that will allow continuous in-network health coverage for thousands of Georgians.

On May 1, 2023, NGHS and UnitedHealthcare were unable to reach compromise to renew a contract before its expiration. Nearly 12,000 Georgians rely on your contract with NGHS, and the consequences of further delay or inaction would be catastrophic to their health and wellbeing.

I have heard from many Georgians stressing the importance of an agreement for their continuity of care. Many have written to me that they will have to find new doctors for their child that require specialized care, or risk having their child go without the care they need.

Additionally, I encourage you to provide clarity on the status of Habersham Medical Center's contract with UnitedHealthcare. Habersham will be part of NGHS as of July 1, 2023, and your enrollees in Habersham County deserve to know if they can continue to receive in-network care at that facility.

I understand that increasing hospital consolidation and rising costs make these negotiations more difficult. However, preserving access to care is above all the most important. Every day that passes without a negotiated contract means patients in Georgia will have to pay substantial out-of-pocket costs or completely forego needed and necessary care.

No health care company should ever put profit over patients, especially while our health care system is in a fragile state. That is why I urge you to quickly reach an agreement with Northeast Georgia Health System and prioritize the patients you serve in Georgia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Warnock" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Raphael Warnock
U.S. Senator