

Is This Physician Crazy? She Walked Away From a “Big Five” Payer Contract!

☒ I recently helped a physician start a new practice and we began applying for enrollment with the Big Five insurance companies. The physician was stunned to find:

- Insurance companies regularly “lost” her applications and we had to submit the same information numerous times. Some companies require an online application which provides no ability to track. They will not accept paper applications which can be tracked by the delivery service.
- She was offered contracts with no fee schedule attached. When we asked for the fee schedule, we were told it was available in the physician portal. When we went to the physician portal, we were told that only enrolled physicians have access to the portal.
- Contracts she received made reference to the physician adhering to the rules of the Provider Manual. When we asked for a copy of the Provider Manual, we were told it was available in the physician portal. You guessed it – only enrolled physicians have access to the portal.
- Some insurance companies routinely took 90-120 days or more to complete the application process, then another 60-90 days to enter the contract into the system so physician claims would be paid. This means that a physician may not be able to get paid by one or more payers for 6-7 months after opening a practice.

The physician ultimately decided to walk away from the most egregious of the payers.

After having numerous potential new patients call the practice

to find out if she was contracted with this payer, she had to tell them that she would not be contracting with this payer.

Here's the letter she wrote to the Insurance Company Representative:

Good Afternoon:

Thank you for your follow-up note. I am uncertain why, but the information you provided, once again, is in direct conflict with the data provided by our local physician's organization as well as the objective data of looking at pricing vs reimbursement for the ___ vaccination.

*I have included for your review **comments** made by an 18-year veteran of contract negotiations, Ron Howrison. It appears being evasive and obtuse in how you negotiate with physicians is an intentional cultural value.*

The tenets of our practice require honesty, good-faith and integrity from all of our partners in healthcare. This article and our experience with you suggests a different and unacceptable organizational value displayed by your company.

At this time, given the disorganized credentialing process, the poor interactions with your company and the vexatious conversation with you, we will not be partnering with you.

We have notified all of our patients insured by your company that we will not be accepting your plans in our practice.

This is a values and ethics-based decision. We regret you and your company have chosen to conduct yourselves with such hostility and disregard for physicians and the important work we do on behalf of our patients.

Sincerely,

Physician in a New Practice