

*Public Comment*

Proposed Transition Plan: Centene/WellCare merger

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The Northern Arizona region has had a positive and collaborative relationship with Care1st Arizona since their established presence as a Medicaid MCO to Northern Arizona in 2018. The overall experience with Care1st throughout the 2018 transition was exceptionally smooth, despite the large-scale shift in Arizona healthcare. Scott Cummings has been incredibly responsive throughout the ACC transition, taken great care to build relationships and understand the unique challenges of our region, as well as work collaboratively with the other health plan to coordinate deliverables whenever possible. Care 1<sup>st</sup> AZ has also demonstrated commitment to truly integrating care at the health plan level. Given all the above, the providers signed below would be in strong support of any transition plan that preserves the Care 1<sup>st</sup> leadership structure that has been integral to ensuring a successful transition.

Additionally, maintaining the current leadership structure, specifically Scott Cummings as Plan President, would ensure network stability and expansion, timely payment, with relatively low disruption to the system, ultimately benefitting the members served.

However, we collectively share significant concerns about the shadow effect of Centene in the Care 1<sup>st</sup> operations in the north. Particularly, because the greatest number of issues during the transition have been with AZ Complete Health in other regions. There have been ongoing concerns with claims reimbursement, reimbursement at the correct rates, difficulty contracting and credentialing, difficulty coordinating to resolve these problems, etc. Fortunately, providers have continued providing care to members in many instances despite receiving incomplete, inaccurate, and, in some cases, no reimbursement. While AZ Complete Health has made efforts to correct these problems and work with the providers at the direction of AHCCCS, many of these issues persist.

Provided that Care 1<sup>st</sup> AZ would truly be able to operate independently in the north for the remainder of the contract, maintain the current leadership team and processes, contracts and rates, we believe this would be in the best interests of the members we serve and afford the least amount of disruption.

Respectfully signed,

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