

June 5, 2020

We very much appreciate the opportunity to serve you in your healthcare journey. Unfortunately, United Healthcare (UHC) sent patients a letter notifying them that they are terminating our medical group participation agreement effective July 1, 2020. We want to be transparent about our interactions with UHC.

It is our experience that UHC, more than any other payer we work with, creates administrative overhead for the doctors and staff that can result in limiting care through frustration. UHC currently represents about 15% of our patients, but over 50% of our administrative time is dealing with UHC issues. We strive to shield our patients from the many inconvenient burdens UHC has put on us, however, many of you have personally experienced the problems UHC creates for providers. These additional burdens take away from the doctors' ability to provide care for patients.

Late last year, we notified UHC that we wanted to renegotiate parts of our contract to address issues we were having with their plans. We did not ask UHC to increase our payments but to change their behaviors. In response, UHC immediately, and without notice to patients or us, removed our physicians from their plans. We filed complaints with the Texas Medical Board and Insurance Board on behalf of our patients, and almost immediately, UHC apologized and added our doctors back. Due to the recent COVID-19 crisis, negotiations were placed on a back burner until our patients told us UHC had mailed notifications to them announcing our contract termination on 7/1/2020. We reached out to UHC on Monday, June 1, asking them to declare if they have no intention of negotiating with us or would they consider extending the termination date to allow additional time to negotiate.

We regret how our contract negotiations with UHC have caused an intrusion in the care you receive from us. Our greatest desire is to continue to provide care for you. You can help by expressing your concerns to UHC by calling the number on your health plan ID card, by visiting www.uhc.com/contact-us and by contacting your employer's benefits manager.

We hope UHC will work with us, so we can quickly reach a reasonable agreement. If you desire to remain with Rheumatology Associates, we appreciate your assistance communicating that to UHC.

Sincerely,
John Richardson
CEO, Rheumatology Associates

