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Angela F. Braly
Chair, President and
Chief Executive Officer

April 23, 2010

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I was disappointed to read your letter regarding the media report published in *Reuters* yesterday as well as your assertion that WellPoint "*deliberately works to deny coverage for women diagnosed with breast cancer.*" Both your statement and Mr. Waas' piece are inaccurate and grossly misrepresent WellPoint's efforts to help prevent, detect, and treat the 1 in 8 of our 34 million members nationwide affected by breast cancer.

To be absolutely clear, WellPoint does not single out women with breast cancer for rescission. Period.

I am confident you read the detailed statement WellPoint issued yesterday highlighting the many factual inaccuracies and unfounded opinions written by Mr. Waas. In light of the facts we have presented, I am disappointed by your letter and the needless anxiety and fear it has raised amongst our members and associates. Our statement is available to the public at www.wellpoint.com. Rather than re-state those details here, I would like to describe a few of the many WellPoint breast cancer prevention and treatment programs that serve as facts to the contrary of Mr. Waas' article and your letter.

WellPoint's more than 3,000 nurses and clinical associates work each day to encourage detection of breast cancer at its earliest stages and to ensure our members are receiving the best breast cancer treatments available. This is neither rhetoric nor exaggeration, as their outreach has increased early breast screenings by nearly 300,000 WellPoint members since 2007. We track this and 39 other health measures through our annual Member Health Index, to which a portion of each WellPoint associates' annual incentive compensation is tied.

WellPoint also covers mammograms for members ages 40 or above, 10 years earlier than the guidelines published by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. We made this policy decision because we know that early detection is the key to survival, with 5-year survival rates of nearly 100% when diagnosed at stages 0 or 1. This also reduces health care costs for the entire system, by avoiding the approximately 10-fold increase in costs associated with treatment beginning after stage 3.



Through research we conducted with the American Cancer Society and Amgen, we discovered our African-American members in Georgia were 50% more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage of breast cancer than Caucasians, and were less likely to receive state-of-the art hormone therapy treatment. The research was published in the January edition of "*Cancer*", the nation's most prestigious and authoritative journal on cancer research and is being translated into programs to better educate members and physicians by our Racial and Ethnic Health Inequalities team. I would also like to point out that in 2008, WellPoint was awarded the Corporate Leadership Award by the Congressional Black Caucus in recognition of our preliminary, yet groundbreaking work to reduce health inequalities in the treatment of breast cancer.

We have been very happy to see that as detection and treatment of breast cancer improves, so too does survivorship. This is why we worked with the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, Genentech, and the UCLA Cancer Survivorship Center to design "The Journey Forward," <http://www.journeyforward.org/>. This program helps physicians and patients to make the transition from oncology care back to primary care and ensures follow-up visits are scheduled, necessary medications are picked up, and survivors get the necessary support to remain cancer-free.

These are just a few of the programs we have in place to address this disease, and this response does not include the countless programs supported by the WellPoint Foundation. Our giving and participation in cancer programs earned us the American Cancer Society's 2009 Corporate Impact Award, their highest level of annual corporate recognition.

Madame Secretary, a three-story pink ribbon hangs in the lobby of our Indianapolis headquarters for many reasons. It provides meaning, motivation, and purpose for our company, our associates and their families. There is arguably no American that does not have a mother, grandmother, sister, or friend who has been affected by breast cancer, and I am no exception. I understand that passions run high when discussing health reform. Breast cancer is a devastating illness and should not be politicized. I proudly stand behind our company and our associates and all they do to support WellPoint's programs that improve the quality of health care for our members with breast cancer.

I request the opportunity to meet with you personally to further clarify the erroneous issues presented in your letter and discuss WellPoint's programs with you in greater detail. Our nation's fight against breast cancer demands that we work together as one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angela F. Braly".

Angela F. Braly

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