

February 2, 2023

Commissioner Jim Donelon
LA Department of Insurance
ATTN: David Caldwell
PO Box 94214
Baton Rouge, LA. 70804-9214

Dear Commissioner Donelon,

On behalf of Bayou Community Foundation, I respectfully submit this letter supporting the proposed acquisition of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana (BCBSLA) by Elevance Health.

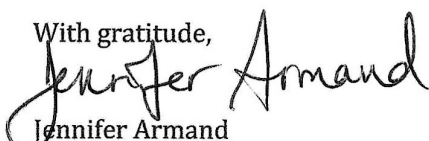
Since 2012, Bayou Community Foundation has served the 200,000 residents of Lafourche Parish, Terrebonne Parish and Grand Isle, Louisiana, with a vision of creating a compassionate and sustainable coastal community for generations to come. A cornerstone of our work includes our impactful Annual Nonprofit Grants Program, funding important human services, education, workforce development and coastal advocacy services that address the most critical unmet needs in our vulnerable bayou region. Rural access to health care and mental health care represent some of our area's greatest needs, in addition to food insecurity and homelessness, which have grown exponentially since the COVID pandemic and Hurricane Ida and have a direct impact on the health and wellness of our local residents.

The proposed acquisition of BCBSLA by Elevance Health will provide even greater resources to address health disparity in our coastal community, with the potential to exponentially advance access to healthcare innovation, services and capabilities for Louisianians at a much faster rate than BCBSLA could do alone.

In addition to the increased access to care this acquisition could provide, I am especially excited about *The Accelerate Louisiana Initiative*. With more than \$3 billion in assets, this foundation will have the ability to make a material difference in the health and lives of the people of Louisiana. Since 2020, Bayou Community Foundation has treasured a strong and fruitful partnership with BCBSLA Foundation, with substantial funding support from that Foundation for our Bayou Recovery Fund for COVID Relief and Bayou Recovery Fund for Hurricane Ida Relief, as well as a grant to support a 2023 Community Needs Assessment. BCBSLA has also sponsored our annual Bayou Region Nonprofit Conference and other Bayou Community Foundation projects to build local nonprofit capacity. We are grateful for this investment in our bayou region and appreciate that *The Accelerate Louisiana Initiative* will have the resources to make an even greater impact on the health and wellness of our residents here.

I fully support the bold step BCBSLA has taken to secure its future, and I strongly recommend that the Louisiana Department of Insurance approve this transaction.

With gratitude,


Jennifer Armand
Executive Director

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