



South Louisiana Financial Services, LLC

July 20, 2023

Commissioner James J. Donelon
P.O. Box 94214
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Commissioner Donelon,

I am pleased to submit this letter supporting the proposed acquisition of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana (BCBSLA) by Elevance Health.

As agency manager for South Louisiana Financial Services, LLC, I have had a successful business relationship with BCBSLA for 18 years. Through our work together, I have a deep understanding of the unique healthcare needs of Louisianians. While we have made progress over the past decade in ensuring more Louisianians have access to affordable health insurance in the state, which in turn provides access to quality healthcare, there is more work to be done.

It is no secret that Louisiana ranks at or near the bottom in many health rankings. It's vital that my fellow Louisianians have access to new innovations, technology and capabilities as soon as possible to help improve their health and access to care. Since we work with many insurers, we are well aware of the investments the national carriers, such as United Healthcare, CVS Aetna, and CIGNA, are making in these areas. While we value our close, local relationships with BCBSLA, we know they need to quickly develop more capabilities to stay current with the marketplace. We are concerned that if BCBSLA works alone as an independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield plan, it could take too long for BCBSLA to bring many of these new capabilities to Louisiana. The acquisition will allow BCBSLA to provide these capabilities to reach Louisianians much quicker than they could on their own.

I'm impressed that Elevance Health has already invested more than \$4 billion in investments over the past several years on behavioral health, complex and chronic care programs, and innovative virtual care solutions. These solutions have demonstrated success nationally in improving members' health and keeping healthcare affordable and focuses on a variety of needs, including specific conditions our citizens suffer from every day, like diabetes, cancer, heart conditions, personalized chronic care management programs, access to high-quality home health, post-acute care, palliative care and more.

One organization working alone can't solve the healthcare issues in Louisiana. That is why I'm very excited about *The Accelerate Louisiana Initiative*. With more than \$3 billion in assets, this is an



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unprecedented opportunity for Louisiana. I'm not aware of any other state that has a foundation of this size solely focused on strengthening communities by addressing health inequities and broader community needs. It can be a game changer and is a fitting legacy for BCBSLA.

Finally, I'm impressed with Elevance Health's model of maintaining local leadership and decision-making authority in their Blue markets. Our long-standing relationships with the teams at BCBSLA will remain intact, and these teams have a laser focus on the needs of their members.

I'm confident that my customers and all Louisianians will benefit from this transaction, and I recommend approval from the department of insurance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles K. Weaver, Jr.", is positioned above the typed name.

Charles K. Weaver, Jr.
Agency Manager
South Louisiana Financial Services, LLC

cc: Mr. Brian Keller